

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD BUDGET WORK SESSION - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2012 **9:17 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Director of Engineering & Public Works Ray Severy, Township Assessor David Lee, Human Resources Director Amy Holda, Communications Director Deborah Guthrie, Police Chief Dave Hall, EMS/Fire Chief Fred Cowper, Director of Finance Diana Hasse, Director of Parks & Recreation LuAnn Maisner, Director of Information Technology Stephen Gebes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
Supervisor McGillicuddy called the meeting to order at 9:17 P.M.
2. ROLL CALL
The secretary called the roll of the Board.
4. PUBLIC REMARKS
Supervisor McGillicuddy opened and closed Public Remarks.
5. PRESENTATION OF THE 2013 RECOMMENDED BUDGET
Finance Director Diana Hasse gave an overview of the highlights for the 2013 Recommended Budget. She also introduced the financial overview of the 2013 recommended budget document relative to the General Fund.

Township Manager Richards touched briefly on proposed interior renovations to the building which currently houses the Okemos Library, noting an in-depth discussion will take place at a future meeting. He indicated, however, the \$100,000 figure budgeted will not be sufficient to include restroom replacement.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Increase of personnel costs in Administrative Services due to funding other post employment benefits (\$450,000), unemployment compensation (\$8,000) and a 1.25% “cost of living” increase (\$104,000)
- Rate increase for ambulance transport to the hospital was based on trends of the Mid-Michigan area and insurance company reimbursement rates
- Insurance billing company makes an attempt to collect ambulance fees from the uninsured
- Arrangements can be made through the insurance billing company to allow the uninsured to pay ambulance bills over time
- Three (3) elections scheduled for 2012: Presidential Primary in February, Primary Election in August and General Election in November
- Cost of elections vary with the type of election to be held
- Elections have expenses for ongoing voter registration and equipment maintenance
- Increase in funding of outside services in Accounting/Budgeting to satisfy the requirement for a single audit of grant activity if the Township receives more than \$500,000 in federal funds
- Township appeal process for ambulance bills through Human Services for residents in poverty

- Rationale for increase in Human Resources Specialist position from ½ time to ¾ time
- Process used for trail maintenance
- Proactive v. reactive tree maintenance on pathways
- Pathway maintenance is contracted out on an annual basis in the spring
- Local road edge trimming in subdivisions is handled by the ICDTR
- Increase in personnel costs for the Recycling Center from 2011 to 2013 due, in part, to the Recycling Coordinator position receiving benefits in 2012
- Appreciation by the public for the Recycling Coordinator's monthly Green Gazette
- 12 hour shifts for police officers have increased the number of officers on the road
- Firefighter/EMS personnel work 24 hour shifts
- Government allows firefighters to work a 50.4 hour work week before receiving overtime
- Part time firefighters provide a pool of individuals to fill in to avoid paying overtime
- Part time firefighters allow for greater flexibility for vacations of full-time firefighters
- Cost of \$12,500 for an additional canine, plus \$2,500 for training
- Canine units used for traffic stops and in high schools
- Rationale for the need of an additional canine unit
- Dogs have only one (1) police officer as a handler
- Operating costs for the Planning Division include funds for the training of an Economic Development planner
- Desire for Planning staff to have more of a presence in the economic development field
- Concern the economic development planner does not become an advocate for the developer, but provides an analysis which includes both pros and cons
- Reminder that the Planning staff has no control over what an applicant submits
- Two pieces of factual information are provided to members at each MEDC meeting
- State dictates the Planning Department be classified as public safety (e.g., building codes, inspections, etc.)
- IT network upgrades include the telephone system
- Land Preservation Millage reduction in 2010
- Disposition of local roads outstanding liability (and fund balance deficit) can be a one-time payment/write-off or spread over a specific period of time
- Suggestion for the Finance Director to develop a schedule for disposing of the deficit fund balance for the Local Roads Fund
- Finance Director will provide alternatives in a recommendation regarding a schedule for forgiving the undesignated fund balance for the Local Roads Fund
- Roads in the Township continue to decline at a rate faster than they can be repaired
- Staff suggestion to engineer the pathway on Okemos Road between the railroad tracks and Central Park Drive for a better estimate of the cost
- Pedestrian Bridge over the Red Cedar River north of Mount Hope Road in dire need of repair
- Board member desire for the Township to build the Mt. Hope and Grand River Avenue pathway connections next year
- Interest on the restricted fund balance for the Land Preservation Reserve Fund is used for maintenance of existing properties
- Board member suggestion to allow the Township Board more oversight of the Meridian Monitor prior to printing
- Recycling Coordinator's position is now funded through the General Fund
- Debt of the Meridian Activity Center (MAC) will be \$50,000 per year through 2018
- Board member suggestion to pay off the MAC debt as the loan interest rate is more than the rate of investment

It was the consensus of the Board to continue discussion of the 2012 budget at its September 18, 2012 Board meeting.

6. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened and closed Public Remarks.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor McGillicuddy adjourned the meeting at 11:04 P.M.

SUSAN MCGILLICUDDY
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

MARY M. G. HELMBRECHT, CMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary