

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD SPECIAL MEETING - **APPROVED** -  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
349-1200, Town Hall Room  
SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2002 **8:00 A.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Hunting, Trustees Brixie, Stier,  
Such and Woiwode  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards and Facilitator Sue Stratton

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER  
Supervisor McGillicuddy called the meeting to order at 8:10 A.M.
2. PUBLIC REMARKS - No members of the public were present
3. POLICY GOVERNANCE DISCUSSION  
(Please see attached discussion summary)
4. PUBLIC REMARKS - No members of the public were present
5. ADJOURNMENT  
Supervisor McGillicuddy adjourned the meeting at 12:15 P.M.

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SUSAN MCGILLICUDDY  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

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MARY M. G. HELMBRECHT  
TOWNSHIP CLERK



**Meridian Township  
Summary of 3/23 Board Retreat Discussion**

**Discussion: How do we monitor executive performance against policy?**

1. Mgr will create a calendar to define when the Board will receive updates on progress toward ends.
2. Mgr will make a recommendation of a defined schedule (by month/date) to the Board for adoption as amended policy 4.5 Monitoring Township Manager Performance.
3. Prior to implementing the use of the Executive Limitations evaluation form, have the attorney review the form and context to determine whether individual responses to a monitoring report are FOIAble.
4. Incorporate the master plan into the Ends (in alignment with the Ends)

**Discussion: Is the Board in integrity with its delegation policy?** There is evidence that Board members sometimes contact staff, rather than the Township Manager.

- Board policy specifies that the Board will never *instruct* staff, it does not suggest that the Board members cannot have a conversation with staff. See Policies 4.2.1. and 3.3.3.
- Questions of clarification should go to appropriate staff, i.e. the Planning Director.
  - Board members should be clear about which hat they are wearing as they pursue information from staff.
- Problems should go to the Township Manager.

SUGGESTED SOLUTION: Re: Questions for clarification

- E-mail questions regarding a report to Susan by a specific date (offer a limited time frame) so that staff does not have to offer the same response multiple times.
  - Board members should identify their worry so that staff can more fully address pertinent issues.
- The Twp Manager should create a template for staff reporting to the Board including how the presented issue impacts or aligns with Ends, fiscal impact, etc.

FINAL CONCLUSION: The Township Manager should ask staff for a solution of efficiency to clarify questions on issues requiring Board action. The solution should be focused on trust building and effective decision-making.

**Discussion: How should we deal with media queries that address an existing lawsuit?**

Concern: When the media exposes a difference of opinion among Board members, it gives information to the plaintiff which ultimate may compromise the Township's position.

Partial Solution: When the media contacts Board members regarding a pending or existing lawsuit, call the Township Manager to give a "heads up".

After a lengthy discussion, the following policy language was agreed to:

**3.3.4.d. In the case of existing legal proceedings, from the point of suit filed to final disposition or public Board action, board members will direct media questions on the specific lawsuit to the Township Manager.**

Recommendation:

- Get a review of this policy by media consultant prior to placing on the agenda.
- Township Manager will investigate the possibilities of voice mail information messages for up-to-date information on lawsuits.

- Each Board member should review the Media Board Packet.
- Advisory note to the Supervisor: Regarding media stories, identify whether the Board action was unanimous or “on a vote of \_\_\_\_\_”

**Discussion: Meeting Agenda alignment with Policy Governance**

After discussion, the Board agreed they did not want to change the language currently presented in their agendas, however, recommended that the Supervisor incorporate where appropriate Policy Governance language in parens. i.e. after visioning session, include the words (What good? For which people? At what cost?)

**Discussion: How do we create more ownership linkage?**

During the vision sessions, there is little public presence.

Recommended solutions:

- Invite individuals from various community organizations to have a conversation with you about a future issue.
- Create a database and broadcast a request for comment on issues.
- Put more detail on the agenda to attract owner attention.

**Discussion: Board Self-Assessment**

Should focus on Board as a whole and not individual behavior.

Should be verbal only.

Not at every meeting, but in a retreat format.