

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD -**APPROVED**-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
Thursday, August 20, 2024, 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland,
Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

ABSENT: Clerk Guthrie

STAFF: Interim Manager Schmitt, Chief Grillo, Director Ianni, Director Clark, Director Gebes,
Deputy Clerk Gordon, Manager Diehl

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Hendrickson called the August 20, 2024, Regular Township Board meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Hendrickson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Deputy Clerk Gordon called the roll of the Board. Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, and Trustee Wilson present at 6:00 pm.

Clerk Guthrie Absent.

4. PRESENTATION

A. From Granger Services – Governmental and Regulatory Affairs Manager Charles Houser and Director of Sales and Market Development Scott Truman

Scott Truman spoke about the waste management and community services Granger currently provides and can provide to Meridian Township residents and businesses. Charles Houser spoke about Granger’s environmental impact and stewardship efforts.

Trustee McCurtis asked for clarity about single stream recycling and asked about the company’s range of service. Mr. Houser gave more information about single stream recycling and clarified that the company is located in mid-Michigan and does not accept out-of-state waste.

Treasure Deschaine asked about the cameras on Granger’s vehicles. Mr. Truman clarified that it is a test project in East Lansing.

Trustee Wilson asked about the bag tag project. Mr. Truman indicated that it will continue in larger communities such as Meridian Township. Trustee Wilson also thanked the Granger representatives for supporting the Haslett-Okemos Rotary Golf Outing.

B. Meridian Township Youth Committee – Suchir Nagisetty

Suchir Nagisetty, Okemos High School Senior, and Addy Sarda, Okemos High School Junior, spoke about the services a Youth Advisory Committee could provide to Meridian Township leadership and to Meridian Township communities.

Trustee Trezise asked if they had contacted and have support from Haslett High School. Mr. Nagisetty stated that they have contacted and have support from Haslett High School students but have not made contact with Haslett High School administration.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if they have established a budget. Mr. Nagisetty indicated that they plan to start small with a minimal budget and generating money through fundraisers.

Trustee McCurtis asked how many youth are interested. Mr. Nagisetty stated that there are a significant number of students in his and Mr. Sarda's social circle that are interested, and that he thinks there would be many more interested students.

Trustee Wilson asked how the focus of this Committee would differ from the Action student group at Okemos High School. Mr. Nagisetty clarified that this would have a greater community effect than Action currently supports.

Supervisor Hendrickson thanked the students for their ideas and suggested the students contact Interim Manager Schmitt to get the process moving forward.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Hendrickson opened comments from the public at 6:44 pm.

Supervisor Hendrickson closed comments from the public at 6:44 pm.

6. INTERIM TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Interim Manager Schmitt gave updates about the following:

- Community Survey is currently at over 250 responses from the dedicated mailing, just short of 40 responses from the online version, and 9 people have utilized the visually impaired function.
- Okemos Schools will resume shortly, the building projects are underway, and the Township's agreement for building review and inspection services has been renewed.
- Invited community members to help paint the community mural during the Wednesday Farmer's Market.
- Two cadets are being sponsored through Police Academy and they will become Meridian Township Officers.
- Reminded the board that the Rotary Luncheon is coming up.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Wilson spoke about the Pride Event.

Treasurer Deschaine attended the American Public Treasurer's Association Conference and passed the Certified Public Funds Investment Manager exam.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Wilson moved to approve the Agenda. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 6-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Hendrickson listed the items on the agenda. He noted that item 12.B on the Draft Minutes from August 8th needs to be corrected to reflect that the motion to suspend rules passed.

Trustee Wilson moved to approve the Consent Agenda with one correction to 12.B indicating that the motion to suspend the rules was passed rather than failed . Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 6-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY

NONE

11. HEARINGS

NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Text Amendment #2024-04 – Local Prosecution of Marijuana Violations Ordinance – Final Adoption

Interim Manager Schmitt gave an overview of discussions that have occurred to date. Staff recommends approval of the proposed Ordinance and has published the Notice of Intent to Adopt the Ordinance pursuant to requirements.

Trustee Sundland highlighted that the purpose of this Ordinance is to allow the Township to collect fines on Marijuana Violations, rather than the fines going to the County. Trustee Trezise indicated his support. Supervisor Hendrickson concurred, adding that this is mirrors State Law.

Trustee Trezise moved to adopt the resolution approving Ordinance 2024-04, an ordinance to allow for local prosecution of certain marijuana violations. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 6-0

- B. Ordinance 2024-07 – Rezone Two Parcels at 350 Haslett Road and the Adjacent Vacant Parcel from RR, Rural Residential, to RA, Single-family Residential – Final Adoption

Interim Manager Schmitt reviewed the discussion that has occurred to date. Staff recommends approval to allow continued development of the Copper Creek subdivision.

Treasurer Deschaine gave a short history of the reasoning behind the rezoning.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adopt the Resolution approving Ordinance 2024-07, an ordinance to rezone two parcels at 350 Haslett Road (Parcel ID# 33-02-02-1-400-003) and the adjacent vacant parcel (Parcel ID# 33-02-02-12-200-015) from RR, Rural Residential. To RA, Single-family Residential. Supported by Trustee Trezise.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 6-0

- C. Selection of Firm for Township Manager Search

Supervisor Hendrickson gave an overview of the firms that have submitted proposals and asked the board to discuss the proposals and select a search firm this evening.

Trustee Trezise indicated that he would not consider 100K Job Hunt because it is relatively new and appears to be mainly online searches which he thinks is inappropriate for the Township's situation. He also indicated that he would not consider Clovity Inc. because they provided only an hourly rate and not a summary rate which he thinks is too much risk. He suggested eliminating these from the search. Supervisor Hendrickson concurred.

Supervisor Hendrickson indicated that he would not consider Raftelis because they have little experience in Michigan and are also the most expensive. Trustee Trezise and Trustee Wilson concurred.

Trustee Wilson indicated that she would also not consider GovHR USA which does not appear to have done work in Michigan because she would prefer someone who understands how government works in Michigan. She expressed her concern about the

Michigan Municipal League proposal because the lead on the project has less experience than the lead from Amy Cell Talent.

Treasurer Deschaine concurred with the previous Trustee's opinions. He indicated his support for Amy Cell Talent because they propose a broad search. Trustee Trezise concurred.

Trustee Sundland indicated her support for Michigan Municipal League because they have a reasonable price and external knowledge of FOIA and Open Meetings Act.

Trustee McCurtis indicated his support for Michigan Municipal League because of their knowledge of Meridian Township but also stated that he could support Amy Cell Talent. Supervisor Hendrickson concurred.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the selection of Amy Cell Talent as the search firm to conduct a National search to fill the position of Township Manager for Meridian Charter Township. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 6-0

- D. Whitehills Lakes South #1 Public Streetlighting Improvement Special Assessment District #428 – Resolution #5

Interim Manager Schmitt gave an overview of the discussion that has occurred to date.

Trustee Trezise moved to approve the Whitehills Lakes South #1 Public Streetlighting Improvement Special Assessment District #428 – Resolution #5, which approves the final Special Assessment Roll, adopts the amount of \$1,580 (\$121.54/lot) as the first year assessment and the amount of \$720 (\$55.39/lot) (subject to adjustment) as the annual assessment thereafter. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 6-0

At 7:14 Supervisor Hendrickson called a 5-minute recess. At 7:21 the board reconvened.

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Special Use Permit #24-17 Haslett Gallery Inc-2119 A Haslett Road-Recreational Marijuana Retailer

Interim Manager Schmitt briefed the Board on information about the application and the process that has occurred thus far.

Trustee Wilson asked the applicant about the lease and their plans to proceed if the SUP is approved. The applicant's attorney spoke on the applicant's behalf and explained the structure of their lease and stated that their plan is to build out the site and get the business open as soon as possible, that the sublease will continue.

Treasurer Deschaine asked staff if the SUP limits the space or if they can expand. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that the SUP limits the space to the 1,617 square feet for which they have applied.

Supervisor Hendrickson thanked the applicant for the completeness of their application. He noted that this item is not up for a vote at this meeting, just discussion, and that it would be up for action at the next Board meeting.

B. Initial 2025 Budget Discussion

Interim Manager Schmitt introduced the topic and briefly reviewed the summaries presented for affected funds. The proposed budget will be distributed on August 27th.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if the Green Grants would be funded. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that the Green Grants would be funded but the Climate Sustainability Grants are on pause at this time – both are separate components of the Environmental Commission's granting program and are General Funds expenditures. Treasure Deschaine suggested asking for corporate sponsorship of the grants. Interim Manager Schmitt stated that it could be addressed after the recycling center grant has been addressed.

Treasurer Deschaine expressed his concern about low IT department staffing given the growing threats to security. Interim Manager Schmitt concurred and added that the funding for police and fire staffing have taken precedence in this budget, that the recommendation to add IT staff was not disregarded but did not make the final draft.

Treasurer Deschaine referenced water and sewer comparison analysis done in 2022 and stated that the proposed increase would help to address needed maintenance and upgrades to infrastructure. Supervisor Hendrickson concurred, adding that he would like to see a more systemic approach to utility rates and more creative solutions to address the issue.

Trustee Wilson asked for more clarity about converting the current Environmental Coordinator position to an Environmental Engineer position. Interim Manager Schmitt stated that the position is envisioned to incorporate the current job duties into a position that also incorporates technical capabilities. This would be another Project Engineer, and the position would incorporate an environmental focus. Treasurer Deschaine concurred.

Supervisor Hendrickson asked about the difficulty of hiring someone to do the same job the current Environmental Coordinator does. Interim Manager Schmitt stated that it could likely be done but it might be difficult because of the uniqueness of the job. Supervisor Hendrickson asked if the expense of converting this job to a full-time job might be better spent in a different department, citing the backlog of HR work that needs to be addressed. Interim Manager Schmitt stated that it would be more expensive to bring on an additional

HR position than to convert the part time Environmental Coordinator position to a full time Environmental Engineer position. Trustee Trezise concurred with Supervisor Hendrickson, adding details he has noticed with HR staffing.

Trustee Wilson requested that a creative way to incorporate some of the Public Works Department needs into the proposed Environmental Engineer position. She then asked about the subscription program for Police tasers. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that the subscription model is tough and a big cost jump, but it provides appropriate benefits to the Police Department.

Trustee Wilson asked about the increased cost of Prime Meridian Magazine. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that it is to add eight additional pages to the magazine to provide a more robust service at a relatively modest increase to the budget.

Trustee Wilson asked if it would be realistic to wait until 2026 to add a Fire Inspector to the budget. Interim Manager Schmitt stated that the Township will continue to function, then acknowledged that the needs of the Departments currently exceed the ability to budget for all of them.

Supervisor Hendrickson asked that a review of allocation of salaries and benefits be done to ensure that they are coming from the appropriate funds, not necessarily as part of the 2025 budget, but that the review be considered for the near future. Interim Manager Schmitt concurred and stated that it is on his radar.

C. ARPA Funding Reallocation

Interim Manager Schmitt reviewed the discussion that has occurred thus far and highlighted the information in the memo. He asked the Board to consider that, if any balance will not be encumbered by June 2025, they roll it into the 2025 Road Program.

Supervisor Hendrickson observed that the funds have so far been used to fund tangible investments and suggested that, since Stryker funds have been incorporated into the budget, the ARPA funds designated for that might be used to fund the generator for the Service Center or be used to fund police equipment or furniture instead of taking from the General Fund. He stated that he doesn't like the idea of putting more ARPA funding towards roads because the amount won't provide for much more road surface, whereas the service center generator has a greater impact. Treasurer Deschaine disagreed because using it for roads is more visible and meaningful for residents than the other items Supervisor Hendrickson suggested, adding that the cost of asphalt has gone up since the millage was approved in 2019 which means that the whole project cannot be completed with those funds.

Trustee Trezise suggested the funds could be put towards the Fire Station Dorm Addition.

Interim Manager Schmitt will instruct staff to use this discussion to create a few options to bring forward to a future meeting.

D. USBGN Proposal to Change to Name of Lake Lansing to Pine Lake

Interim Manager Schmitt reviewed the information in the memo. Lake Lansing Advisory Committee is opposed, and Ingham County is likely to oppose due to costs associated with changing name.

Trustee Sundland commented that there are many lakes called Pine Lake and that Lake Lansing is a unique name, that she would like to keep it.

Trustee Wilson stated that she wants to hear from the people who live on and use the lake before she makes a decision. She asked if there was any deadline. Interim Manager Schmitt confirmed that the USBGN provided no deadline.

Supervisor Hendrickson asked to arrange a time to meet with the Lake Lansing Property Owners Association before making a decision.

E. Manager Review Process

Supervisor Hendrickson outlined the process he has proposed and explained that he would like staff feedback and a more transparent review process.

Trustee Trezise asked for clarification regarding the manner in which the reviews will be presented to the board. Supervisor Hendrickson indicated that it would be presented in an executive summary and the individual reviews would be included in that packet.

Trustee Wilson indicated her support saying that she likes the staff review portion, particularly that different employees will be selected each year.

Trustee McCurtis expressed his support saying that he has familiarity with the process through other employers and is comfortable with it.

Treasurer Deschaine stressed that while feedback from employees is valuable, the Board should be the body that evaluates the Manager.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Hendrickson opened comments from the public at 8:29 pm

Roger Taylor, Township resident, spoke to express his interest in applying for the Township Manager position. Supervisor Hendrickson let the resident know that the application window will likely open in October.

Supervisor Hendrickson closed comments from the public at 8:29 pm

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

NONE

16. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Wilson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.

VOICE VOTE

YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 6-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Scott Hendrickson
Township Supervisor

Deborah Guthrie
Township Clerk