

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD SPECIAL MEETING **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Township Hall Room
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2018 **10:00 am.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland

ABSENT: Treasurer Brixie (IN AUDIENCE), Trustee Deschaine (INTERVIEWEE)

STAFF: Human Resources Director Marx

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The Recording Secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 10:04 am.

Julie Brixie, 2294 Hamilton Rd., Okemos; spoke in support of Phil Deschaine for the position of Treasurer. ~~based on his community and professional experience and earned public trust by being elected to Trustee.~~

Christina Sinila, 1391 Silverwood Dr., Okemos; spoke in support of Deschaine.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood, Haslett; spoke in opposition of the appointment process for Treasurer. ~~Noted announcements publicizing the process did not mention the new Treasurer would be appointed at this meeting. Stressed importance of fiscal understanding for appointee.~~ Spoke in support of Linda Burghardt for Treasurer.

Deborah Premoe, 3884 Pine Knoll, Okemos; spoke with her husband David in support of Deschaine.

Don Frank, 5277 Cornell Rd., Haslett; spoke in support of Deschaine.

Barbara Rigal, 4875 Country Dr., Okemos; spoke in support of Deschaine.

Thomas Haas, 1491 Franklin St., Haslett; spoke in support of Deschaine.

Mike Duda, 6037 Marietta Way, East Lansing; spoke in support of Deschaine.

Deb Nolan, 4389 Hartwood Rd., Okemos; spoke in support of Deschaine.

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 10:35 am.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the Agenda. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0

6. COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of Interview Questions

Trustee Jackson suggested that Question 19 be asked by Supervisor Styka.

Clerk Dreyfus noted that Question 8 is the only question pertaining to understanding of statutory fiscal responsibilities; suggested question include understanding of municipal investments.

Clerk Dreyfus moved to add additional sentence “... please describe your understanding of municipal investment options and your philosophy of investing to maximize return on tax dollars.” to Question 8. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0

Clerk Dreyfus requested to add a question on environmental philosophy and perspectives on community sustainability.

Trustee Jackson moved to add new Question 19, “What are your perspectives on environmental stewardship and long-term sustainability” as stated by Clerk Dreyfus, and make Question 19 the new Question 20. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0

Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the interview questions as amended by amending Question 8, adding Question 19, and moving original Question 19 to 20, to be read by Supervisor Styka. Supported by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0

B. Township Treasurer Interviews

At the November 8, 2018 meeting, the Board voted to establish a Subcommittee Selection Process to select 3 finalists from all applications received. The Subcommittee (Supervisor Styka, Trustees Jackson & Opsommer) received 6 applications for Treasurer, and on November 15 selected three (3) candidates as finalists. The Board also voted to hold a Special Board Meeting on Saturday, November 17 to interview the 3 finalists.

The Board asked Interview Questions 1- 20 to the first applicant: Phil Deschaine.

Supervisor Styka moved for a recess 11:45 am.

Supervisor Styka reconvened the meeting at 11:50 am.

The Board asked Interview Questions 1- 20 to the second applicant: Dante Ianni.

Supervisor Styka moved for a recess at 12:14 pm

Supervisor Styka reconvened the meeting at 1:05 pm.

The Board asked Interview Questions 1- 20 to the third applicant: Linda Burghardt.

Supervisor Styka moved for a recess at 1:52 pm.

Supervisor Styka reconvened the meeting at 1:59 pm.

C. Selection of Township Treasurer

The Board voted at the November 8, 2018 meeting to select a Treasurer after conducting interviews.

Trustee Opsommer moved to appoint Trustee Deschaine as Meridian Township Treasurer. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Board Discussion:

Board members discussed the attributes and interview responses of the three (3) finalists: Phil Deschaine, Dante Ianni, and Linda Burghardt.

~~Pros and cons of each candidate, background experience and relevancy, knowledge of Township taxes, community service, need for training, benefit of fresh perspective, soft skills and hard skills, candidate research skills, understanding of municipal investments, and processes, concerns about appearance of backroom deal resulting in political appointment rather than merit-based selection, views on selection process as being non-biased and independent, board member belief in being open-minded and not having someone pre-selected in mind, specific financial knowledge needed vs having general skills and aptitude, appointment is different than being elected, position will be up for election in 2 years, very brief responses compared with very lengthy responses, concerns about low number of qualified candidates, have time to open up application process for additional candidates, interested citizens knew Treasurer position was going to be open so no need for additional timeframe, candidate knowledge of tax tribunal & assessing review process, candidate's ability to express themselves, technical skills vs. public policy skills, education/degrees/job titles vs people skills and community work, various perspectives on what is needed for success in the position.~~ AND SELECTION PROCESS DISCUSSED.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus, Trustee Sundland

Motion carried: 3-2

7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 2:58 pm.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood, Haslett; Thanked the Board for their time in deciding the new Treasurer, requested an application for upcoming Trustee vacancy.

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 2:59 pm.

8. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

9. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Opsommer moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 5-0

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.

RONALD J. STYKA,
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS,
TOWNSHIP CLERK