



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
Communications Commission Special Meeting **APPROVED** minutes  
Monday, October 7, 2024 | 5:00 pm

PRESENT: Chair, Leslie Charlies; Commissioner, Lisa Whiting-Dobson; Alternate  
Commissioner, Mike Nevells  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager  
TOWNSHIP: None  
COUNSEL: None  
COMCAST/AT&T: None

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Charles called the meeting to order at **5:15 pm**

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**.  
Seconded by Alternate Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY,  
JUNE 26, 2024 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Alternate Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT**

Manager Diehl went over the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report.

HOMTV received a Philo Award for their submission of a documentary made by their former intern Stella Govitz. The documentary was titled Young Environmentalists and focused on two Okemos High School students who were on the Environmental Commission in Meridian Township.

Nathan Beemer, a Boy Scout in Okemos, completed his Eagle Scout Project with HOMTV. His project consisted of digitizing 50 hours of old CDs and organizing them into a system where they were labeled with their names and date.

Manager Diehl wants the Communications Commission to look over and revise the HOMTV Operating Policies due to conflicting language in multiple sections.

Discussed big events that were promoted over the summer: Summer Concert Series, Wednesday Farmers' Market, Meridian Pride, puzzle competitions, Green Fair, Karaoke at the Marketplace, Senior/Community Center informational sessions, National Night Out, Beer in the Barn Fundraising Event, Touch-A-Truck, Pancake Breakfast.

Manager Diehl went over the Communications Department budget for 2025 and explained what each line item was used for.

7. **COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Communications Chair: Chair Charles is working on a document requesting that the Township Board reinstate the Communications Director position.

Township Board Liaison: None.

Commissioners Report: None.

8. **ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Televising Senior/Community center Task Force Meetings**

The Township Board requested that the newly reformed Senior/Community Center Task Force meetings be televised on HOMTV. According to the HOMTV Operating Policies, the Communications Commission has to approve the expansion/limitation of HOMTV meeting coverage.

Alternate Commissioner Nevells moved **TO RECOMMEND THE APPROVAL OF THE REQUEST TO TELEWISE THE SENIOR/COMMUNITY TASK FORCE MEETINGS ON HOMTV BEGINNING IN OCTOBER 2024 AND LASTING UNTIL APRIL 2025.** Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Alternate Commissioner Appointment to Regular Member - Mike Nevells**

Mike Nevells serves as an alternate member, with a term ending on December 31, 2024. At the June 26, 2024, regular Communications Commission meeting, Alternate Commissioner Nevells stated he would like to move the role of a regular member.

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson moved **TO RECOMMEND THE APPOINTMENT OF MIKE NEVELLS TO THE ROLE OF A REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION MEMBER, WITH A TERM ENDING ON DECEMBER 31, 2024.** Seconded by Chair Charles.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Communications Commission Application – Amol Pavangadkar**

On August 19, 2024, Amol Pavangadkar emailed Manager Diehl asking for more information about the role of Communications Commissioner. She met with him on August 21, 2024, to explain the tasks of the Communications Department, as well as

the tasks of a Commission member. After the meeting, he stated his interest in applying, and his application was received on September 19, 2024.

Alternate Commissioner Nevells moved **TO RECOMMEND THE APPOINTMENT OF AMOL PAVANGADKAR TO THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION MEMBER, WITH A TERM ENDING ON DECEMBER 31, 2025.** Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson.

**9. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. General Fund Allocation for Communications Commission Grants**

Manager Diehl mentioned Clerk Guthrie's idea to have Meridian Connectivity Grants for residents where internet service does not exist or for households who are economically challenged. The Communications Commission was going to request \$30,000 from the Township Board to issue these grants, but because the March 2024 Communications Commission meeting was cancelled and the 2025 budget was due two days after the June 2024 Communications Commission meeting, Manager Diehl did not feel comfortable making that ask without having a concrete plan in place. Manager Diehl would like the Commission to discuss the manner forward before bringing it to the Board.

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson said she feels that broadband should be considered infrastructure and that it should be available to residents like water and sewer are.

Alternate Commissioner Nevells would like this program to initially be for financially challenged people who already have access but need help paying their bills, instead of it being about building the infrastructure.

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson would like the Commission to talk with the Community Resource Commission to learn more about the need and their criteria.

**10. COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. Compliments/Complaints**

None.

**A. Correspondences**

None.

**11. REPORTS**

**A. Video Service Provider(s)**

None.

**B. Programming**

None.

**C. Website & Social Media**

None.

**D. Promotions/Publications**

Manager Diehl informed the Commission that they have already begun working on the Prime Meridian Magazine and laid out the timeline. The goal is to have it released at the beginning of February.

**E. Finance**

Manager Diehl informed the Commission that PEG fees will be in their own restricted fund beginning in 2025. Commissioner Whiting-Dobson asked if the department would get back the money that was incorrectly put into the General Fund from 2020-2024. Manager Diehl explained that was her next step, but they will have to wait until a new finance director is selected.

**F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni**

None.

**G. Broadband**

None.

**12. PUBLIC REMARKS**

None.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

Alternate Commissioner Nevells moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Charles adjourned the meeting at 6:05 pm.