



AGENDA
MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP
COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
January 22, 2025 6:00 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PUBLIC REMARKS
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. December 18, 2024 Regular Meeting DRAFT Minutes
6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT
 - A. Communication Manager's Report
7. COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. Chair's Report
 - B. Township Board Liaison's Report
 - C. Commissioner Reports
8. ACTION ITEMS
9. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - A. HOMTV Operating Policies Update
 - B. Communications Commission Policies and Procedures Review
 - C. Universal Connectivity in Meridian Township
10. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Compliments/Complaints
 - B. Correspondences
11. REPORTS
 - A. Video Service Provider(s)
 - B. Programming
 - i. Program Totals and Video On-Demand Analytics
 - C. Website & Social Media
 - i. Website Analytics
 - ii. Social Media Analytics
 - D. Promotions/Publications
 - i. 2025 Prime Meridian Magazine
 - E. Finance
 - F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni
 - G. Broadband
12. PUBLIC REMARKS
13. ADJOURNMENT

All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained from the Commission Chair.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Communications Department; Communications Manager, Brandie Yates, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4208 - Ten Day Notice is Required.
Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Administrative Conference Room



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
Communications Commission Regular Meeting **DRAFT** minutes
Wednesday, December 18, 2024 | 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Commissioner (Vice Chair) Lisa Whiting Dobson; Commissioner Mike Nevells,
Commissioner Amol Pavangadkar
ABSENT: Chair Leslie Charles
STAFF: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
TOWNSHIP: Clerk Angela Demas
COUNSEL: None
COMCAST/AT&T: None

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Charles called the meeting to order at **6:00 pm**

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Pavangadkar moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**.
Seconded by Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT

Manager Diehl went over the 4th quarter report.

The Township Board selected their candidate for the next Township Manager, Timothy Dempsey.

The Communications Department would like to implement an internal communications policy as well as a crisis communications plan in 2025. Manager Diehl would also like to update the HOMTV Operating Policies due to outdated and confusing language.

Manager Diehl and Specialist Stohlin plan on holding social media training for the employees who have access to Meridian Township's social media accounts. Manager Diehl and Specialist Stohlin also plan on taking FEMA's public information officer training.

Manager Diehl went over the events that were marketed in the 4th quarter and stated that there will be four students for the spring 2025 semester.

7. **COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Communications Chair: None.

Township Board Liaison: Township Board voted to select Tim Dempsey as the next Township Manager. Clerk Demas stated the Board wants to include citizen outreach in their 2025 goals. She also noted that HOMTV and the Township Board will work together to ensure closed sessions are filmed once the Board comes out closed session. Commissioner Whiting Dobson asked what specific goals the Board wants in relation to communication, but Clerk Demas said they are still developing them.

Commissioners Report: Commissioner Nevells wants the PEG fees to be corrected. He also wants the Commission to look at the Communications Commission Policies and Procedures.

Commissioner Pavangadkar asked Manager Diehl how much is spent on broadcast equipment. Manager Diehl went through the approved 2025 budget for the Communications Department and explained what each line item is used for. Commissioner Pavangadkar also asked if HOMTV partners with the Okemos and Haslett School Districts. Manager Diehl explained that nothing is in place currently.

8. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. Set 2025 Meeting Schedule

At the end of the year, the Communications Commission must set their meeting schedule for the following year. The Communications Commission was presented with five meeting dates for the 2025 calendar year.

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE THE 2025 COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED.** Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Chair and Vice Chair Appointments

At the end of the year, the Communications Commission must also select a new chair and vice chair for the following year.

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE LISA WHITING DOBSON AS THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION CHAIR FOR THE 2025 CALENDAR YEAR.** Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE LESLIE CHARLES AS THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION VICE CHAIR FOR THE 2025 CALENDAR YEAR.** Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. General Fund Allocation for Communications Commission Grants

Commissioner Whiting Dobson began the discussion by mentioning how COVID showed the lack of internet connectivity that some people have and how that fueled this discussion item and wanting to help find a solution for universal connectivity in Meridian Township. In the past, the Communications Commission discussed the possibility of issuing grants to those in need of service. She brought up the Community Resource Commission and how they have criteria and standards for determining the needs a resident has and how they can help them. She mentioned that the Commission could possibly adopt their criteria when it comes to deciding who gets internet assistance.

Commissioner Whiting Dobson would like to meet with Comcast, AT&T, and Metronet to see if they would be open to assisting with internet connectivity. She also brought up WOW and how they are in Williamston, but was curious if they could provide internet in Meridian Township.

Commissioner Nevells wants to address both the infrastructure cost it would take for someone to get connected to internet, as well as assistance with their bill if they need it. He suggested that the Township and cable companies could take care of the infrastructure cost, and the Commission would fill in the gaps and issue grants for the WiFi bill portion. He wants to be able to help anyone with connectivity, not just those who need help with their bill.

Commissioner Nevells suggested having a special meeting with Township stakeholders and the cable companies to present the idea and get the discussion started. It can be more of an information gathering meeting before the discussion goes further.

Commissioner Pavangadkar mentioned the Quello Center at MSU. Commissioner Nevells would like to add an agenda item to the January 2025 Communications Commission meeting where the Commission and staff discuss how a meeting can be set up with the proper stakeholders. Commissioner Whiting Dobson asked Commissioner Pavangadkar if the Quello Center would send a representative to our meeting. He said he would check on that.

Commissioner Nevells suggested that a special committee be put together to help with this because the Commission will not be able to accomplish it with only four meetings in a calendar year.

All commissioners asked Manager Diehl to add an agenda item to the January 2025 meeting where they can discuss next steps.

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

None.

F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni

None.

G. Broadband

None.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pavangadkar moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Whiting Dobson adjourned the meeting at 7:16 pm.



Communications
Commission

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT



Township Manager Search Process

Tim Dempsey's contract was finalized at the January 7 Township Board meeting, and he begins his first day on Monday, January 27.

2025 Township Board Goals:

At the January 7 meeting, the Township Board finalized their 2025 goals. A copy of those goals will be provided at the end of this report.

2025 Communications Department Goals:

After the Board finalized their 2025 goals, the Communications Department met to develop their 2025 goals.

The 2025 goals are as follows:

- Begin creating a Digital Accessibility Plan so that Meridian Township will be in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which states that local governmental organizations with a population under 50,000 residents must comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards by April 26, 2027.
- Revise and update the HOMTV Operating Policies and Marketing and Promotion Strategy. Create an Internal Communications Policy and a Press Release and Media Advisory Strategy.
- Improve engagement (measured by content interactions) on Meridian Township Facebook and Instagram social media pages by 5% compared to 2024 monthly values.
- Collaborate with the Communications Commission and appropriate stakeholders to address universal connectivity in Meridian Township and how to better-connect residents to internet access.
- Expand HOMTV programming by developing a new podcast and a method for connecting residents to decisions the Township Board makes during their meetings.
- Develop a consistent schedule of programming for the HOMTV channel.
- Create a plan to update the HOMTV website while ensuring that it meets compliance with Title II of the ADA.
- Develop written protocol for each position in the Communications Department. Crosstrain all three positions so that each team member has the knowledge to step in should someone be unavailable.
- Build out the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) plan for HOMTV equipment needed over the next five to 10 years.

2020-2024 PEG and Franchise Fees

The checks for the fourth quarter PEG and franchise fees have not been delivered, but Manager Diehl still wanted to present the 2024 numbers and how they have trended over the last four years. A copy of that graph will be provided at the end of this report.



Meridian Township Board Top Five Goals 2025

Provide Superior, Citizen-Driven Services

Provide exemplary service to the community while actively soliciting contributions from citizens, volunteer boards, commissions, authorities, and regional partners to strengthen the connection between the staff, Board, community, and region.

Environmental Sustainability

Implement environmentally friendly and sustainable policies for both public and private projects while investing in replacement of aging infrastructure throughout the Township.

Enhance Redevelopment in Key Areas

Enhance our standing as a prime location to develop, own, and operate a business, with a focus on the redevelopment of our primary commercial areas: downtown Okemos, downtown Haslett, Carriage Hills, and the Meridian Mall.

Senior/Community Center

Following the Senior/Community Center Task Force's recommendation in Spring 2025, continue to move towards construction of a new facility, starting in late 2025 or early 2026.

Improve Citizen Outreach and Communication

Tell our story better by enhancing communications through social media, homeowners' associations, communitywide and major events, and any other mechanism to better engage our diverse, multicultural community.

Comcast and AT&T PEG Fees (2020-2024)

| Comcast | 1st QTR | 2nd QTR | 3rd QTR | 4th QTR | Total |
|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 2020 | \$26,978.02 | \$26,436.26 | \$27,310.13 | \$27,546.43 | \$108,270.84 |
| 2021 | \$27,180.71 | \$26,730.11 | \$27,373.02 | \$27,672.10 | \$108,955.94 |
| 2022 | \$27,760.34 | \$27,554.12 | \$27,609.58 | \$27,857.88 | \$110,781.92 |
| 2023 | \$26,994.24 | \$26,177.55 | \$25,324.20 | \$24,837.18 | \$103,333.17 |
| 2024 | \$24,115.76 | \$23,086.70 | \$22,406.47 | TBD | \$69,608.93 |

| AT&T | 1st QTR | 2nd QTR | 3rd QTR | 4th QTR | Total |
|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 2020 | \$6,646.62 | \$6,444.84 | \$5,934.62 | \$6,002.00 | \$25,028.08 |
| 2021 | \$5,272.92 | \$5,165.24 | \$4,820.26 | \$4,586.36 | \$19,844.78 |
| 2022 | \$4,209.84 | \$4,072.14 | \$4,104.46 | \$4,060.16 | \$16,446.60 |
| 2023 | \$3,469.68 | \$3,312.08 | \$3,053.41 | \$2,897.07 | \$12,732.24 |
| 2024 | \$2,704.24 | \$2,606.01 | \$2,536.78 | TBD | \$7,847.03 |

Total PEG Fees (2020-2024)

\$582,849.53



Communications
Commission

Commission Members Reports & Announcements



Communications
Commission

Action Items



Communications
Commission

Discussion Items



To: Communications Commission
From: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Date: January 16, 2025
Re: HOMTV Operating Policies Update

The Communications Commission previously updated the HOMTV Operating Policies on December 2, 2020. Since then, HOMTV's scope has changed, and the policies should reflect that.

There are also inconsistencies in the policies that need to be corrected. One example is under sections two and three. Section two states that the Communications Commission is responsible for expanding or limiting live meeting coverage, whereas section three states that the Communications Manager has the final say over election coverage.

Given these factors, staff would like the Communications Commission to review the current policies and assist the Communications Department staff with updates.



OPERATING POLICIES

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT ACCESS CABLE CHANNEL

Originally approved by the Cable Communications Commission on March 4, 1992
Approved by the Township Board on October 8, 1992
Revised & approved by the Cable Communications Commission on February 19, 1993
Amendments recommended by the Activity Coordination Committee on April 14, 1993
Amendments recommended by the Personnel Committee on April 26, 1993
Approved by the Township Board on May 4, 1993
Revised & approved by the Cable Communications Commission on September 2, 1998
Approved by Township Board on September 15, 1998
Revised & approved by the Cable Communications Commission on April 28, 2000
Approved by Township Board on July 5, 2000
Revised and approved by the Cable Communications Commission on January 7, 2009
Approved by the Township Board on April 7, 2009
Revised and approved by the Cable Communications Commission on February 1, 2012
Revised and approved by the Communications Commission on December 2, 2020

PREAMBLE

Communications Commission, previously called the Cable Communications Commission, was established in 1977 to oversee the administration and implementation of the Cable Franchise Agreement, including:

- I. To advise the Township Board regarding the implementation of the Franchise Agreement.
- II. To encourage the use of the access channels which include public, educational and governmental channels.
- III. To formulate policy relating to the access channels. All such policies are subject to approval by the Township Board.

(For a complete list of functions, refer to the Township Ordinances, Title XV, Chapter 115.)

The Government Access Cable Television Channel serving Meridian Township is known as HOMTV. The operating policies of HOMTV are based upon the Goals and Objectives of the Communications Commission, as approved by the Meridian Township Board. It is the intent of these policies and procedures to consolidate and regulate the implementation of the Goals and Objectives. The Communications Commission shall monitor the implementation of these policies and procedures as administered by the Communications Manager.

Employees within the Communications Department, operating HOMTV, are governed by the Township Personnel Policy. On matters related to programming, the Communications Commission shall govern.

SECTION ONE: GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMMING AND PRODUCTION

- I. The Communications Manager is responsible for generating program ideas, and for implementing and overseeing their production, either directly, or by delegation through his or her subordinates. All programming decisions are to be made by the Communications Manager according to established policies and guidelines as approved by the Communications Commission.
- II. Programming shall be developed in accordance with the "Goal Statements" adopted and periodically revised by the Township Board.
- III. Programming shall be developed with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion principles in mind and strive to represent the unique make-up of the Meridian Township community and be accessible to all.
- IV. Programming of a non-local origin is to be avoided in all but the most exceptional situations. Such exceptions shall only be approved by the Communications Manager. In the case where programming of non-local origin is used, it must be presented with locally originated opening and closing statements.
- V. All production decisions are to be made by the Communications Manager, either directly, or by delegation through his or her subordinates.
- VI. The HOMTV production equipment and facilities are to be operated only by staff members and interns of Meridian Township who have been trained and approved for equipment use under the direction of the Communications Manager.
- VII. Special production requests must be submitted to the Communications Manager at least one week prior to the requested taping date.

SECTION TWO: TOWNSHIP MEETING COVERAGE

- I. The Communications Department staff and HOMTV interns are responsible for providing live coverage of regular meetings of the Township Board, the Planning Commission, the Park Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and the Environmental Commission, up to a total of ten meetings per month. The Township Communications Commission may recommend to the Township Board expansion or limitation of meeting coverage responsibilities based upon staff and facility capabilities.
- II. Live coverage of regularly scheduled Township meetings shall be the number one programming priority to air on HOMTV. Program schedule adjustments must be made to accommodate irregular start and end times of televised meetings.

- III. To cancel regular meeting coverage, the staff liaison to the Board or Commission in question, must present the cancellation notice to the Communications Manager in writing as early as possible before the scheduled meeting.
- IV. To schedule special meeting coverage, the staff liaison to the Board or Commission in question, must present the television coverage request to the Communications Manager in writing at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. Special efforts will be made to provide "skeleton crew" coverage of Township Board or Commission meetings, which are scheduled with less than two weeks' notice.
- V. When a Board or Commission goes into "closed session" during the live coverage of a meeting, the HOMTV Meeting Producer is authorized to display a message describing the current status of the meeting. When a Board or Commission goes into "recess" during the live coverage of a meeting, the HOMTV Meeting Producer is authorized to display a message describing the current status of the meeting or to continue live coverage of the meeting room during the break. In most circumstances, live coverage of the meeting may resume following a recess or closed session.
- VI. Video recordings of the live coverage of Township meetings are not to be edited for replay.
- VII. Video recordings of Township meetings shall not be considered the official record of the meetings and shall not be treated as such. These recordings will be available online and retained on the HOMTV Archiving System.

SECTION THREE: TOWNSHIP ELECTION COVERAGE

- I. HOMTV shall include programming pertaining to Meridian Township elections. The scope and format of such coverage shall be determined by the Communications Manager. The minimum acceptable coverage shall be graphic material summarizing election results, initially presented sometime on election night, and carried on HOMTV at least until the normal program schedule begins the next day. The Communications Manager shall work with the Township Clerk and Election Commission to provide graphic material and/or other material announcing pre-election administration information.
- II. Special efforts shall be made to produce programming in "even year" Township elections, with a maximum emphasis on elections held to fill positions on the Township Board and/or the Park Commission. All registered candidates shall be afforded an equal opportunity to be included in this coverage. The scope and format of such election year programming shall be determined by the Communications Manager, and may include the following components:

- A. An interview program for candidates, including standardized questions and follow-up questions.
 - B. An opportunity for candidates to make up to a two minute statement on their candidacy.
 - C. A debate-style program for candidates, organized by party affiliation and/or desired office.
 - D. A call-in show to allow residents to ask questions of the candidates.
- III. The Communications Manager shall ensure that all programming featuring registered candidates be balanced with programming featuring their opponents. In cases where balance is not possible due to the lack of participation of one or more candidates, the participating candidates will receive balanced coverage in comparison to the entire field of participating candidates.
- IV. Candidates for elected office shall not be included in HOMTV programming ninety days before an election, with the exception of Township meeting coverage, special election coverage and coverage of incumbents performing official duties. The Communications Manager shall decide if equal time for opposing candidates is necessary to balance the coverage of incumbent candidate's performance of official duties.

SECTION FOUR: PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM-SERIES

- I. There shall be one series in the HOMTV Program Schedule based on a "public forum" format. This program may include panels of guest experts or residents, opportunity for participation by viewers and/or the opportunity for involvement by a live audience. Topics in this series should be of local interest but may include statewide or national issues discussed from a local perspective.
- II. A magazine-format series will be produced for airing on HOMTV on a regular basis as a news and information program.
- III. Other program-series' will be produced for airing on HOMTV under the direction of the Communications Manager. It is the goal of staff to produce programs of a similar nature on a regular basis to form a series. The Communications Manager shall decide which programs to produce as a series and shall supervise their production and regulate their format and frequency.
- IV. Other programs may be produced to air on HOMTV which do not fit into any existing program series. These will be considered "specials" and may be of any format.

- V. There shall be a Computer Graphics Message Display Sequence and/or Virtual Channel of promos and PSAs to air on HOMTV during times when there is no live or taped programming. Messages of an emergency nature will be displayed as soon as possible by staff.
- VI. The HOMTV Program Schedule will be determined by staff. Primary concepts for Program Schedule formulation include variety and high frequency of program replays.

SECTION FIVE: LOCAL PROGRAMMING DEVELOPMENT

- I. Requests or suggestions for program development may be made by officials and employees of Meridian Township and from the public. Requests must be made in writing. Each request for programming received by staff may be reported to the Communications Commission. The Communications Manager will respond to requests for programming within a reasonable time, based on staff and facility limitations.
- II. The Communications Manager shall use any of the following criteria to make judgments regarding the initiation of new programming:
 - A. The programming is about Meridian Township, its residents, its employees, its elected officials and/or its appointed officials.
 - B. The programming is in demand by Meridian Township residents or employees.
 - C. The programming is a public service to Meridian Township residents.
 - D. The programming serves to promote Meridian Township as a community.
 - E. The programming serves as communication from Meridian Township employees to Meridian Township residents.
 - F. The programming serves as communication from Meridian Township residents to Meridian Township residents.
- III. The Communications Manager shall use any of the following criteria to make judgments regarding the denial of new programming:
 - A. The programming shall include no pornographic material.
 - B. The programming shall include no religious material.
 - C. The programming shall include no paid advertising.

- D. The programming shall include no direct appeals to purchase commercial goods or services.
 - E. The programming shall be of sufficient technical quality to match the current minimum quality level of programming on the channel.
 - F. The programming does not meet one or more of the criteria set forth in paragraph II of this Section.
- IV. The Communications Manager shall use any of the following criteria to make judgments regarding the termination of existing programming:
- A. The programming has served its original purpose.
 - B. The programming can be more appropriately produced by another local access channel.
 - C. Producers of the programming are not cooperating with the staff in a consistent or professional manner.
 - D. Staff or facility limitations cause the need to reduce programming levels in general.
 - E. The criteria used for denying new programs can also be used to terminate existing programs. (See paragraph III above).
- V. The Communications Commission shall hear and decide appeals from those who have been denied programming requests under this Section. Such decisions shall normally be rendered within thirty (30) days of the Communications Commission's first consideration of the appeal.

SECTION SIX: GENERAL POLICIES

- I. Staff shall not be used to produce video programming for private or commercial organizations. Staff may collaborate and charge a fee for services to other public agencies and similar organizations to develop programming, which further serves the public interest, as determined by the Communications Manager. Sponsorships for HOMTV Programming, special events, website and other digital platforms, may also be available.
- II. It is the objective of staff to program at least eight (8) hours per day, seven (7) days per week. The Communications Manager may cancel or reduce programming for up to ten (10) weeks per calendar year for the purpose of equipment maintenance, staff

limitations or other extreme circumstances.

- III. Staff will make duplicate copies upon request of programs as a whole for a nominal fee according to the attached fee schedule. Segments and/or raw footage are not available for duplication unless pre-approval granted by the Communications Manager.
 - A. Fees may be waived by the Communications Manager for people closely involved with the production of the program being copied.
 - B. Staff will only make duplicate copies of programs that have aired on the channel.
- IV. Expenditures to finance the operations of HOMTV may be made by the Communications Manager upon approval of the Township Finance Director and authorization of the Township Manager, subject to all requirements of the Township Purchasing Policies and within maximum amounts appropriated in the Township Budget. Purchases proposed by staff that are projected to exceed the total budget appropriations shall require a budget amendment recommended by the Communications Manager upon approval of the Township Finance Director, authorization of the Township Manager and approved by the Township Board, in conformance with Township purchasing and budget policies. Transfers among line items within the total amount appropriated in the operating budget may be made by the Communications Manager upon approval of the Township Finance Director and authorization of the Township Manager.
- VI. All HOMTV video recordings shall remain the property of HOMTV.

FEE SCHEDULE

Video Copies

1. \$15.00 flat rate per order.
2. \$10.00 per hour of running time on order, or any increment thereof.
3. \$6.00 for videotape supplied by staff for the copy.
4. \$6.00 Shipping & Handling.

Audio Copies

1. \$10.00 flat rate per order.
2. \$10.00 per hour of running time on order, or any increment thereof.
3. \$4.00 for audiotape supplied by HOMTV for the copy.



To: Communications Commission
From: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Date: January 16, 2025
Re: Communications Commission Policies and Procedures Review

At the December 18, 2024, regular Communications Commission meeting, Commissioner Nevells said he would like the Commission to review their policies and procedures.

Staff is bringing those policies and procedures forward for the Commission to discuss and make any revisions they deem fit.



COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION RULES AND PROCEDURES

RULE 1: AUTHORITY

These rules are adopted by the Meridian Township Communications Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) pursuant to Title XV, Chapter 115 of the Meridian Township Code of Ordinances.

RULE 2: MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Members. The Commission shall consist of five regular members and two alternate members appointed by the Meridian Township Board. The Commission may recommend names of suggested appointees to the Township Supervisor. Members must be residents of the Township with an interest in telecommunications, communications and/or marketing of the Township. Conflicts of interest that would inhibit a person's ability to serve on the Commission includes employment by a video/internet service provider or communications company.

2.2 Alternate Members.

1. An alternate member shall be called to serve in place of a regular member by the chairperson or vice chairperson if:
 - a) a regular member is absent from or will be unable to attend two or more consecutive meetings of the Commission; or,
 - b) a regular member is absent from or will be unable to attend meetings for a period of more than thirty consecutive days; or,
 - c) a regular member will be abstaining from participating in consideration of a case in which the regular member has a conflict of interest.
 - d) When called to serve, an alternate member has the same voting rights as a regular member.
 - e) Alternate members may be called in any order.

2.3 Conflict of Interest. A regular member or alternate member shall disqualify themselves from the discussion and decision in any case where the member has a conflict of interest due to financial considerations or other issues of significance. Failure of a member to disqualify themselves shall constitute misconduct in office.

2.4 Attendance. Members of the Commission who are absent from more than three consecutive, regularly scheduled Commission meetings and work sessions or more than thirty percent of the regularly scheduled Commission meetings and work sessions in a calendar year, shall be subject to review and possible recommendation for removal by the Township Board. Exceptions may be made if absences are due to the conduct of other business as authorized by the Commission.

RULE 3: TERMS OF OFFICE

3.1 Terms of Service. Terms of service for Commission members shall be three years or until a successor is appointed.

3.2 Vacancies. A successor shall be recommended to the Township Board for appointment not more than thirty days after the term of the previous member has expired.

3.3 Removal from Office. Members of the Commission can be subject to removal from office by the Township Board for nonperformance of duty or misconduct in office.

RULE 4: OFFICERS

4.1 Selection. At the last or first regular meeting in a calendar year, the Commission shall select from its members a chairperson and vice chairperson.

4.2 Terms. Term of office shall commence from the date of selection for a period of one year, or until a successor has been selected. Officers shall be eligible for re-election, but shall not serve more than three successive full terms in one office.

4.3 Duties of the Chairperson. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings, appoint committees and official representatives to other groups with concurrence from the Commission, authorize calls for special meetings and perform such other duties as may be specified by the Commission.

4.4 Duties of the Vice Chairperson. The vice chairperson shall act in the capacity of the chairperson in the chairperson's absence. In the event the office of the chairperson becomes vacant, the vice chairperson shall succeed to that office for the unexpired term and the Commission shall select a successor to the office of vice chairperson for the unexpired term.

RULE 5: RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY

The Commission shall assume the following responsibilities and authority pursuant to the Meridian Township Code of Ordinances, Title XV, Chapter 115, Section 115-20, subsection (a), numbers 1-12:

1. Discuss franchises and franchise applications.
2. Advise the Township Board on franchise applications.
3. Advise the Township Board on revocation of franchises.
4. Make recommendations to the Township Board on resolution of disputes between

franchisees, subscribers and access users.

5. Advise the Township Board on rate regulation for municipal owned broadband, when applicable.
6. Make recommendations to the Township Board on operational policies of local access channels.
7. Encourage the use of access channels.
8. Encourage and supervise the interconnection of systems.
9. Review and report to the Township Board on franchise compliance.
10. Make recommendations to the Township Board for video equipment and maintenance purchases from PEG fee funds.
11. Conduct system evaluations and make recommendations to the Township Board regarding franchise amendments and ordinance amendments.
12. Evaluate, research and advise the Township Board in the implementation, and expansion of, broadband and internet connectivity in Meridian Township.

The Commission shall assume the following responsibilities and authority pursuant to the Uniform Franchise Agreement:

1. To hear informal complaints by subscribers and advise them to contact the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) for pursuing the informal or formal complaint process. (Exhibit F)
2. To designate the use of Public, Education and Government (PEG) Access Channels by franchisees.
3. To approve rules for usage of PEG channels and review content for usage compliance, as outlined in channel operational policies.
4. To direct franchisees to construct or repair parts of the cable system.
5. To review financial reports of the franchisees.
6. To recommend the percentage of franchise fees and PEG fees on new services or non-subscriber revenues.

The Commission shall assume the following responsibilities and authority pursuant to the Operating Policies of HOMTV:

1. To advise the Township Manager when carrying out aspects of the Township Personnel Policy with Communications Department/HOMTV staff.
2. To recommend to the Township Board expansion or limitation of the meeting coverage responsibilities of HOMTV.
3. To hear appeals of program decisions made by the Communications Manager.

RULE 6: COMMISSION MEETINGS

6.1 Procedures. The chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Commission. Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, shall govern all questions of procedure not otherwise provided for in these rules or by state or federal law.

6.2 Quorum. Three members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at all meetings of the Commission. In the event a quorum is not present at any meeting, a majority of the Commissioners in attendance may reschedule the meeting providing proper advance notice is given to the public.

6.3 Motions. All motions of a substantive nature shall be made in writing. The name of the originator and seconder of the motion, the findings of fact and the rationale for action shall be recorded in the minutes.

6.4 Voting. Voting shall be by voice except that a roll call vote will be taken and recorded for all proposals requiring a public hearing or when requested by a member of the Commission. When a question is put by the chairperson, every Commissioner present shall vote either "yes" or "no", except that a Commissioner may abstain from voting if excused by unanimous consent of the other Commissioners present.

6.5 Decisions. Providing a quorum is present, a simple majority of those present and voting shall be required for Commission action.

6.6 Meeting Schedule. The Commission shall meet in regular session according to a schedule adopted at the beginning of the calendar year or as subsequently revised. Special meetings shall be called by the chairperson or shall be called at the request of three members of the Commission.

6.7 Meeting Locations. Meetings shall usually be held at the Township Municipal Building. Meetings shall be open to the public, except where closed sessions are permitted by the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

6.8 Notice of Meetings. Notice of meetings and the agenda for business shall be posted according to existing Township procedure. Commission members shall be notified as soon as possible

6.9 Meeting Agenda. An agenda shall be established for each meeting of the Commission by designated Township staff and/or the chairperson, and shall be made available to Commission members and the public in advance of the meeting (Exhibit A). The designated Township staff and/or chairperson shall determine the order of business, subject to amendment by the Commission.

6.10 Public Participation. A member of the public may speak at public meetings of the Commission in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. Time for public comment shall be provided at the beginning of a regular Commission meeting. Additional time shall be scheduled at the end of such meeting. Time limits for comments or presentations at Commission meetings by persons in the audience may be established by the Commission in accordance with the number of requests to speak, providing such limits shall not be less than three minutes per speaker.
- b. Persons shall be recognized by the chairperson before speaking.
- c. Persons addressing the topic of a scheduled public hearing are encouraged to present their remarks during the public hearing portion of the meeting.
- d. During a public hearing, the following order shall be used:
 1. Township staff review;
 2. Comments by the public or other interested parties;
 3. Discussion and action by the Commission.
- e. A member of the public may speak at public meetings of the Commission during the public remarks session of the meeting or at other appropriate times if allowed by a majority of the Commissioners present.

RULE 7: RECORDS

7.1 Meeting Records. The Communications Manager (or designee) shall be responsible for minutes of each meeting of the Commission and for maintaining the official record, including all Commission actions. An audio recording device shall be used whenever possible to improve the accuracy of meeting minutes.

7.2 Meeting Minutes. Minutes shall include all motions made, the names of the mover and seconder,

the method and outcome of votes taken. Comments by a Commissioner may be placed in the official record upon the members' request. Minutes and records of the Commission meetings shall be made available to the public in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Act.

7.3 Closed Sessions. Minutes of closed session shall be maintained separately by the Meridian Township Clerk's Office and not disclosed to the public except upon court order. Minutes of closed sessions may be destroyed one year and one day following their approval.

RULE 8: COMMITTEES

8.1 Standing Committees. Standing committees of the Commission shall be appointed by the chairperson and approved by the Commission to assist in the ongoing responsibilities of the Commission and the operation of the Township government. The Standing Committee members will elect their own chairperson. Standing committees shall serve to review, study and propose Commission actions related to operations which are the responsibility of the Commission. Committees shall be assigned specific areas of concern and shall work with the Communications Manager.

8.2 Special Committees. The Commission may establish and appoint special committees to meet the needs and objective of the Commission. The Commission may authorize the chairperson to appoint members to these committees, including the chairperson. Permission may be granted to a special committee to designate its own chairperson.

8.3 Quorum. A majority of committee members shall constitute a quorum for committee meetings. A Standing or Special Committee shall open its meetings to the public in compliance with the Open Meetings Act if it has more than two commissioners present.

8.4 Notice of Meetings. Notice of meetings shall be made available for the public at least eighteen hours in advance of such meetings as required by state law to be considered an official committee meeting. Each committee shall provide a written record of its meetings to the Communications Manager which shall constitute its public record. A separate file shall be kept in the Communications Department for each committee. Minutes of committee meetings shall be sent to all Commissioners.

8.5 Reports. Standing Committees will report their recommendations to the Commission during the committee report portion of Commission meetings. Minority reports may be offered at that time.

8.6 Dissolution. The Commission may discharge a committee from further consideration of any matter upon approval of a majority of the Commission.

RULE 9: APPEALS OF PROGRAMMING DECISIONS

9.1 Filing. Appeals may be filed with the Commission by any person aggrieved by a programming decision made by the Communications Manager.

9.2 Procedures. Appeals shall be filed in accordance with the following procedures, deadlines and regulations:

- a. Application: An appeal of a programming decision made by the Communications Manager shall be filed within thirty days of the date of the decision being appealed.
- b. Hearing: A hearing on said appeal shall be held at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.
- c. Presentation: The order of presentation during the appeal is included as "Exhibit E" in the appendix of this document.

9.3 Decisions. The Commission shall issue a decision within a reasonable time from the filing of an appeal.

9.4 Reconsideration. The Commission may consider a petition for reconsideration if substantial new information warrants such reconsideration and if such petition is made prior to the Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting following the meeting at which the decision was made.

RULE 10: PUBLIC HEARINGS

10.1 Purpose. Public hearings shall be held prior to recommending approval by the Township Board of any amendment to the Township Cable Ordinances or for other matters as required by statute, federal law, or Township Ordinance. Public hearings may also be held for informational purposes. (Exhibit C)

10.2 Notice. Notice of public hearings, including time, place and purpose shall be made in conformance with requirements of P.A. 285 (1931, as amended) and the Township Code of Ordinances, and such other procedures as may be adopted by the Commission or Township Board.

10.3 Format. Public hearings shall be part of regular Commission meetings and shall be conducted according to established written procedures.

10.4 Complaint Hearings. The Commission will hear informal and formal complaints of municipally owned systems.

RULE 11: RESCISSION

A motion to rescind or amend something previously adopted may be brought pursuant to Section 34 of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

RULE 12: SUSPENSION OF RULES

A motion to suspend these rules may be brought pursuant to Section 25 of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

RULE 13: AMENDMENTS

These Rules may be amended or repealed by a majority of the members of the Commission at any regular meeting or at any properly called meeting provided that a copy of the proposed changes shall be filed with the chairperson at least ten days prior to the meeting at which action therein is to be taken and copies of the proposed changes are provided to each Commissioner at least five days prior to said meeting, together with written notice of the time and place of such meetings.

RULE 14: ANNUAL REPORT

The Commission shall, on or before March 1 of every year, submit a written report to the Township Board, which report shall contain a statement of the activities of the Commission during the preceding calendar year.

EXHIBIT A:



AGENDA
MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP
COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
August 25, 2021 6:00 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PUBLIC REMARKS
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. June 2, 2021 Regular Meeting DRAFT Minutes
6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT
 - A. Department Goals & Project Update Report – August 2021
7. COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. Chair’s Report
 - B. Township Board Liaison’s Report
 - C. Commissioner Reports
8. ACTION ITEMS
 - A. Disposal of Surplus Equipment
 - B. Communications Commission Rules & Procedures Revisions
9. DISCUSSION ITEMS
10. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Compliments/Complaints
 - B. Correspondences
11. REPORTS
 - A. Video Service Provider(s)
 - B. Programming
 - i. Program Totals and Video On-Demand Analytics
 - C. Website & Social Media
 - i. Website Analytics
 - ii. Social Media Analytics
 - D. Promotions/Publications
 - E. Finance
 - F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni
12. PUBLIC REMARKS
13. ADJOURNMENT

All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained from the Commission Chair.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Communications Department; Communications Manager, Brandie Yates, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4208 - Ten Day Notice is Required.
Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Administrative Conference Room

EXHIBIT B: EXAMPLES OF PURPOSES FOR INFORMATIONAL HEARINGS

1. To provide additional time to give all interested parties an adequate chance to present evidence.
2. To provide additional discussion or presentation time because of the complexity of the proposal or issues.
3. To provide for public comment as a result of making major changes in a proposal following an initial hearing.
4. To introduce and discuss new evidence, external to changes in a proposal, not available at the time of the initial hearing.
5. To seek citizen input on any appropriate subject.
6. To educate the public on selected issues or proposed actions and enhance public understanding or acceptance.

EXHIBIT C: GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. When scheduling meetings, the Commission may limit the number of hearings to be placed on the agenda of any meeting. Each hearing shall be identified on the agenda.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, the following format will be used:
 - a. Introduction by the chairperson (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation, applicants and defendants.)
 - b. Summary of subject matter.
 - c. Presentation by interested members of the public.
 - d. Discussion and questioning by Commission members.
 - e. Final remarks by applicant.
 - f. Adjournment.

EXHIBIT D: PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

1. The number of persons admitted to a meeting room will be in keeping with public safety requirements and availability of space. Efforts will be made to provide adequate room to accommodate those in attendance.
2. Established protocols for public participation will be announced at the beginning of the meeting.
3. Opportunity to speak will be granted either under Public Remarks, during old business or during a public hearing, as most appropriate.
4. Reasonable time limits may be allotted for public comments, in keeping with other business which must be considered at a particular meeting.
5. A member of the public will be provided no less than three minutes to speak.
6. Those completing a request form in writing shall be called upon first to speak.
7. Members of the public will identify themselves by name and address prior to presenting their comments.
8. Written communications will be read into the record during a meeting when requested by the author. All written communications will become part of the Commission record.
9. The chairperson, without objections from the Commission, may invite members of the public to participate in informal discussion on all or selected agenda items during Commission work sessions.

EXHIBIT E: FORMAT FOR PROGRAM APPEALS

1. Presentation by the Communications Manager.
2. Presentation by appellant.
3. Questions from the Commission to the Communications Manager.
4. Questions from the Commission to the appellant.

5. Closing comment by the Communications Manager.
6. Closing comment by the appellant.
7. Discussion by members of the Commission.
8. Decision by vote of the Commission.

EXHIBIT F: FILING A TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO COMPLAINTS TO THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (MPSC)

All informal electric, natural gas, telecommunications and video complaints received at the MPSC will be processed in accordance with the appropriate rules and laws.

When you contact the MPSC with a complaint, it will be sent to the company for an investigation. The company has up to 10 business days (2 weeks) to investigate and work towards a resolution. During this time the company may be in touch with you. At the conclusion of the company's investigation, they will provide the MPSC with a thorough and detailed response at which time the MPSC will conduct a review to ensure that it is in accordance with all enforceable rules and regulations. The MPSC will then communicate the findings of the informal complaint with you.

Filing Complaints Online:

www.michigan.gov/mpsc

Filing Complaints by Phone:

1.800.292.9555

Filing Complaints by Mail:

MPSC Customer Assistance
P.O. Box 30221
Lansing, MI 48909



To: Communications Commission
From: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Date: January 16, 2025
Re: Universal Connectivity in Meridian Township

At the December 18, 2025, regular Communications Commission meeting, the commissioners asked Manager Diehl to add an agenda item to the January 2025 meeting so they can discuss the next steps for establishing universal connectivity in Meridian Township.

Commissioner Nevells stated that he wants to address both the infrastructure cost it would take for someone to get connected to internet, as well as assistance with their bill if they need it. The other commissioners were also in agreement.

It was discussed that a meeting should take place with the Commission, Township stakeholders, and the cable companies to present the idea and see what can be done to get this started. Commissioner Nevells also suggested that a special committee be formed to help accomplish this since the Communications Commission only meets four times per year.

At this time, the Commission should discuss who the stakeholders are and when a meeting should be set.



Communications
Commission

Compliments/ Complaints



Communications
Commission

Video Service Provider



Communications
Commission

Programming



Communications
Commission

Website Analytics



Communications
Commission

Publications/ Promotions



To: Communications Commission
From: Rachael Stohlin, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist
Date: January 13, 2025
Re: Prime Meridian Magazine

Updates

In the last Communications Commission meeting, we reported that the Prime Meridian Magazine would be ready for public release in late January. This date has been delayed to early February due to the following:

1. Rather than develop the magazine in Canva, as the Communications Department did in 2024, we will use Adobe InDesign instead. Canva, a tool commonly used for simple graphic design and marketing, lacks the editing power, precise formatting, and capability for high-resolution imagery that InDesign offers. Because the Communications Department already maintains an Adobe subscription that includes InDesign software, this shift was chosen as the best approach for the magazine moving forward.
2. In 2025, the Parks and Recreation Department is trialing an annual sponsorship package for events and programs. As a benefit for the department's largest sponsors, an advertisement in the magazine was considered as a potential sponsorship perk. Slightly delaying the magazine's release allowed the department to have more time to recruit major sponsors.

At the time of this memo, the first draft of the magazine is close to completion, and we are nearly ready to request content approval from the magazine's contributing staff. An adjusted timeline is provided below:

- Late December to early January:
 - Marketing & Public Relations Specialist to complete magazine layout and content placement.
- Mid-January:
 - Marketing & Public Relations Specialist to collect quotes from printing companies
 - Marketing & Public Relations Specialist to request and receive proofreading assistance from at least three staff members or volunteers, including the Communications Manager.
- Late January:
 - Magazine to be reviewed and approved by relevant contributing staff
 - Magazine to be reviewed by the new Township Manager (no revisions will be permitted beyond this time).
- Early February:
 - Magazine to be sent to selected printer for publication and mailing.



Communications
Commission

Finance



Communications
Commission

HOMTV Internship/Alumni



Communications
Commission

Broadband Update