

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING **-APPROVED-**  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517-349-1232, Special Meeting via Zoom  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2020 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Director of Public Works Perry, Fire Chief Hamel, Police Chief Plaga, Community Planning Director Kieselbach, Information Technology Director Gebes, Parks and Recreation Director Maisner, Finance Director Mattison, Human Resources Director Tithof, Economic Development and Neighborhoods Director Clark, Communications Manager Yates

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and welcomed new board member Clerk Guthrie.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board.

4. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:03 pm.

No comment

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:04 pm.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Trustee Wisinski moved to add a discussion item to authorize Manager Walsh and Communications Department to issue a media advisory to support Governor Whitmer's Department of Health and Human Services and Ingham County Health Department recommended response to the increase in COVID cases and deaths.**

Manager Walsh replied he recommended it be an agenda item.

**Trustee Jackson moved to approve the Agenda as modified. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7- 0

6. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2020 Action Plan Review

Manager Walsh reviewed the 2020 Action Plan (10 Goals) and the accomplishments.

Discussion:

- Asked for before and after statics to the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Ratings (PASER) of the Roads; current graph only illustrates achieving an 8 rating beginning when the road millage was passed
- Outlined the actions the Township took to address the Pandemic, sending staff home to work when possible but with a need to have staff on site was able to address the safety needs of staff and residents and acknowledged these issues will continue into 2021
- Director Perry reported the crack seal that was placed on the roads should extend the its road life by at least five years but depends on the amount of traffic on the road and the need to use the PASER Ratings for the roads
- Director Perry summarized the proposed use of asphalt millings to upgrade the service drive into the recycling site. He stated a good example is the Towner Road Park axillary parking area.
- Although the replacement of the Okemos Road Bridge and work on Okemos Road are County projects, Director Perry reported the new timeline for these projects are 2022. Although funding will be available in 2021, the County does not want to start construction until spring 2022. The construction will be over a six or more month period.
- Township Manager Walsh stated with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion and the question of the functionality of the restrooms in the Municipal Building such as including a toe kick, those items are on the table for discussion by the group to assist in making the Township welcoming by all.
- Township Manager stated the unfunded liability is in three sections: retiree health care, Township pension and MERS pension. With respect to retiree health care, the Township is doing well at the 91% funding level. The Township Pension Fund is at 90% funded. In the MERS Pension Funds, the Township is at the 62-63% funding level but would like to get it up into the higher 67-69% funding level. Additional payments can be discussed during the budget process.

B. 2020 Department Year End Review

Manager Walsh summarized the 2020 Department Year End Review

C. 2021 M-Team Department Plan

Manager Walsh outlined the 2021 M-Team Department Plan

## D. Develop 2021 Action Plan

## Discussion:

- Language change to wording used in 2020 as it pertains to sustainable of solar energy
- Suggested tying adoption of revised sign ordinance with updating the township signage (with branding efforts and wayfinding signage); suggested looking at sign ordinance especially as it pertains to the new CATA advertising policy and restrictions to businesses; propose to have it as a future agenda discussion item for study session and not incorporate into the goals
- Include measuring the solar goal with a matrix
- Suggested looking at offering free or at a reduced rate broadband for the low income families
- Suggested looking at entire sustainability plan, not just solar energy but also transportation, water management especially the wetlands; Environmental Commission is developing green infrastructure issues to the Township Board
- Suggested adding to Goal C, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, to be more specific: to develop a plan to broaden our opportunities for enhanced DEI with specific goals, objectives, outcomes and objectives
- Suggested bringing in competition such as with fiber optics; would like to see more than Comcast offered in the community; DTN developed their own fiber optic company; need community-wide broadband but it is expensive
- Suggested adding 2020 Goal D in with the 2021 Goals: “fulfill our promises made to voters in 2017 by allocating enhanced pension payments to MERS, maintaining 73 emergency responders and submitted our purchase order for a new ladder truck”; have ordered the ladder truck but need to track the other promises
- Suggested combining proposed Goal A with proposed Goal I to keep the goal number to ten
- Suggested replacing “allow” with “facilitate” in Goal F; the Communications Commission can assist with development of a plan
- Suggested looking at how the City of Marshall operates their broadband as a utility and Marshall is already looking to expand their coverage area to cover the townships in their area and Linden Township passed a millage to build out their broadband
- Suggested including accessibility in Goal C and question how accessible the Township is such as with restrooms, drop boxes, wayfinding signage, etc., need to address both physically and digitally; this is included under “equity”
- Suggested the need to revisit the Pathway Master Plan; suggested adding to Goal G “and review the Pathway Master Plan”

- E. Authorize Manager Walsh and Communications Department to issue a media advisory to support Governor Whitmer’s Department of Health and Human Services and Ingham County Health Department recommended response to the increase in COVID cases and deaths

Trustee Wisinski summarized the new COVID cases and deaths in the State and stated we all need to do our part to continue to protect each other. The Township has created a task force, secured personal protective equipment, required masks in public buildings, installed pods for payment access to limit access into the Township building, developing flexible work schedules, closed the buildings when necessary, increased the CARES funding, implemented the CARES hotline, implement water shutoff and utility payment delay, and issued grants to small businesses. She is suggesting to advise Township residents to support the following of State and County health directives.

Township Manager Walsh stated he is willing to create a media advisory but asked if the Board would like included that the Township Board strongly supports the State and Governor in their efforts and list what the Township has done to support them or just list what the Township has done.

Discussion:

- Suggested listing what the executive orders entail, list out what the health departments are recommending at this time and what the Township is doing to address these steps by the public health departments; with additional lock downs, may need to look at additional business grants

**Treasurer Deschaine moved to suspend the rules and to adopt a motion to support the orders of the State and County Health Directors with regard to the Pandemic. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7- 0

#### 7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 7:47 pm.

None

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 7:49 pm.

#### 8. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine stated during the summer, inside foot traffic was reduced by 90% due to the office pods. Due to the winter months beginning December 1, residents will be coming by to pay their tax payments. The drop boxes will be available and if you want a receipt mailed to you, check the box. The Town Hall Room has been set up if a resident needs to come into the building with their payment.

IT Director Gebes reported approximately 50 employees are using the "logmein" accounts to work from remote locations. His department is still working out details with the telephones including call forwarding and other hardware configurations. Staff is excited about the projects to make the workforce more flexible.

#### 9. CLOSED SESSION

- A. Township Manager Annual Performance Review-Motion to go into a closed session to discuss the Township Manager's annual performance review under MCL 15.268(a), based on the Township Manager's request for a closed meeting. (This motion requires a simple majority roll call vote.)

**Trustee Opsommer moved to go into closed session to discuss the Township Manager's annual performance review under MCL 15.268(a), based on the Township Manager's request for a closed meeting. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie

NAYS:

Motion carried: 7 - 0

Supervisor Styka moved the meeting into closed session at 7:50 pm.

**Trustee Jackson moved to return the meeting to open session. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 7 - 0

Supervisor Styka moved the meeting back into open session at 8:45 pm.

10. ADJOURNMENT

**Trustee Jackson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 7-0

**Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 8:46 pm.**

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RONALD J. STYKA,  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

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DEBORAH GUTHRIE,  
TOWNSHIP CLERK