

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD POLICY GOVERNANCE
REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Dreyfus,
LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards, Attorney Andria Ditschman

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor McGillicuddy called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL

Supervisor McGillicuddy called the roll of the Board.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened and closed public remarks.

4. DISCUSSION OF GOAL SETTING AND POLICY GOVERNANCE

A. Board Discipline – Andria Ditschman, Hubbard Law Firm

- Civility should be built into Board meetings
- 2001 Policy Governance was adopted, generally following Robert's Rules of Order, although Robert's Rules of Order were not adopted
- Board Members need to know what role they play
- Policy works towards the end
- 3.0 - General commitment as to how the Board will govern
- 3.1 – governing style is to have outward vision, be proactive, not into the administrative details but bigger picture
- 3.3 – decorum, various types of conflicts of interest, not exercise individual authority
- 3.3a – Board member interaction with staff must not promote own agenda
- 3.3(6) – necessary to respect confidentiality and sensitive information
- 3.3(8) – access to the attorney through the Township Manager
- 3.5 and 3.6 – Supervisor's duties and role in the Board's process
 - authority to make decisions regarding certain portions of policy governance
- Importance of Board member familiarization with the Charter Township Act
- Rules of Procedure
 - Board is self policed
 - Discipline – 3.1.3 and 3.1.5.
 - Board member conduct – Charter Township Act
- Confidentiality issue
 - Board member does not unilaterally have the authority to decide information labeled as confidential can be shared
- Consent agenda
 - Purpose is to streamline the meeting – items should not be controversial
 - Need for Board to revisit this issue
- Procedural issues
 - Call the question – does not necessarily end discussion
 - Wait for recognition from the Supervisor before speaking

Board members discussed the following:

- Call the question - 2/3 majority vote to end discussion
- Policy Governance as the Board Rules
- Annual Agenda Planning
 - Joint Boards and Commissions Meeting

- Intergovernmental Meeting
- August Town Hall Meeting
 - Suggestion for Town Hall Meeting to be held in September
- Consent agenda
 - Add rule(s) to Section 3.4.3 of the Policy Manual
 - Consent agenda items shall only be moved to action or discussion by general consensus or a two-thirds majority
 - Consent agenda shall pass with a two-thirds majority vote
 - Use of Robert's Rules of Order as a guide with the above exception
 - Essential for the Board to have a parliamentary authority

Consent Agenda Rules: (Questions for the Attorney)

Q. Can we create our own rules and say the consent agenda passes with a simple majority rather than a unanimous vote?

A. I haven't done any legal research on that question. I'm not aware of statute or case law that requires unanimous approval. I know the purpose, though, of a unanimous approval is because there isn't discussion or debate. That is one option. I would want to be careful that if issues were raised before the meeting, and I guess that's what you might want to add in there that all issues raised before the meeting, then whoever is attending to those would have to decide (because you don't want to set up the Township for litigation issues down the road) if this is something that needs discussion, then let's move it to action right now. One of the problems is that the Board packet comes out Friday, and I don't know if everyone feels that there's adequate time to get those questions in, and get the answers back before you meet on Tuesday. I'm not suggesting that you move the day the information goes out, but one of the issues with the consent agenda is that you need, especially if there are seven (7) or eight (8) things on the consent agenda, the time to make sure that everybody has all the information they need and have the time to call, ask the questions, and you have time to get back to them before you see them at the meeting. I think you could probably do what you are suggesting, being careful that you are not somehow passing issues that need debate or discussion and are getting on the consent agenda anyway.

Q. Don't you think if it was something that needed debate, more than one person, when they hear the question, would like to remove this item? Rather than the scenario where we have political grandstanding, a repeat of a repeat argument that we've all heard six (6), eight (8), ten (10), twelve (12) times about a Board member's feelings concerning certain language that's included in the motion which is about to be approved that they don't agree with....some repeat occurrence?

A. I agree that, in general, with the discussion that's already taken place with this Board, I would say that in most situations, the issues which were on there were appropriate consent agenda issues. I don't want to make an assumption why any one member thought more discussion was needed, but I think the consent agenda issues have been appropriate. I do suggest, as you were, that we need more guidelines or rules, more explanation, so that it is clear to staff and the manager what is being put on. I don't know if we need the Board to commit to more prep time or if they need more prep time. I say that because there have been multiple times when multiple people have expressed being uncomfortable and wanted to move it.

B. Policy Governance Review – Sue Stratton-Radwa

- Impact of the practice of Policy Governance on Meridian Township
- More open and transparent decision making
- Greater staff efficiency, saving taxpayer dollars
- Achievable goals
- Civility brought to the Board
- Efficiency for the Board
 - In the past, staff prepared work for committees which then was duplicated for the whole Board
 - Clarity of the Board's role
- Annual goals are set in broader terms and allows staff latitude

- Policy Governance is a statement of values adopted by the Board as a way of doing business
- Individual Board member definitions of openness and transparency
 - Making Board members vulnerable and receptive to public feedback
 - Allowing all citizens to see all items on the Board's agenda
 - Uniformity in receipt of information where discussion is public
 - Decisions made with equal information (no secrets or side deals)
 - Communicating the how and why of a member's decisions to other Board members and the public
 - Having clear access points for the public to interface with the Board and staff with a clear feedback loop between staff and the Board
 - Recognition that the citizens are owners of township government and entitled to all information the township has
 - Placing Township Board agendas on the website so that the public has enough time to view
- Openness and transparency delineated in Policy Governance 2.8.3, 2.8.4, 3.1.5 and 3.6.1(b)
- Specific concerns
 - Legal issues
 - Caution surrounding violation of attorney/client privilege in pending litigation
 - Protection of the Township in pending litigation
 - Lawsuits which have been settled are public knowledge
 - Possible publication of a list of pending litigation with no supporting information which would satisfy the public's right to know
 - Board consensus that protection of the Township's position had higher value during litigation
 - Financial issues on the consent agenda
 - Appropriation of new money over \$10,000 on the consent agenda without discussion does not apprise the public
 - Total Township budget of approximately \$30 million
 - New appropriations
 - No need for discussion if items were already approved in the budget
 - Budget adjustments must be approved by the Board
 - Grant matches are not appropriated until grant is awarded
 - Possible policy addition in 3.4.3 by adding (a) which defines the rules and process for the consent agenda
 - Consultant suggestion for construction of two consent agendas: operational consent agenda and Board consent agenda
 - Context for the origin of the appropriation included in packet submitted by staff
 - Requirement of a two-thirds majority vote regarding removal of consent agenda items
 - Clarity in potential consent agenda policy development by listing what is and is not an acceptable item for placement on the consent agenda
 - Criteria regarding acceptance of grants which require matching funds
- Placement of openness and transparency in 3.1 *Governing Style*
- Overview of the Model
 - Ten Principles of Policy Governance
 - Ownership
 - Governance position
 - Board holism through ends and executive limitations
 - Board makes policies, not decisions
 - Cultivation of a sense of group responsibility
 - Ends Policies
 - Long term intended impacts to be realized
 - What good, for whom at what cost
 - Board means policies
 - Governance process – rules of engagement
 - Board-Management delegation – link with internal organization
 - Executive Limitations
 - Design parameters around a shared value

- Policy “Sizes”
- Delegation to Management
- Reasonable Interpretation
- Monitoring
 - Policy, interpretation of policy through eyes of manager, why the manager’s interpretation is reasonable, data tract, actual data
- Attention to Board self assessment
- Systematic schedule
- Changes to 2009 Goals
 - 1.1 – Policy Title
 - 1.1.1 – Amend to add: *and land preservations parcels*
 - 1.1.1c – Add to read: *Protected trees*
 - 1.1.3bii – Amend to read *Existence of community gardens and/or community-sustained farms*
 - 1.1.6a – Add to read: *Unnecessary lighting minimized or eliminated*
 - 1.2 – Health and Safety Ends
 - 1.2.4f – Add to read: *Gaps in pathways on major roads eliminated*
 - 1.3 – Prosperity Ends
 - 1.3.1 – Amend to read: *Maintaining or appreciating property values*
 - 1.3.3d – Amend to read: *Entrepreneurial activities for all facets of the community encouraged*
 - 1.3.3e. Add subsection to read: *Redevelopment encouraged*
 - 1.3.3f. – Add subsection to read: *Local businesses*
 - 3.1 – Governing Style
 - Amend by adding as: *(a) openness and transparency*, and relettering the remaining subsections
- Priorities for Board consideration in 2009:
 - Tree protection
 - Greenbelt (relative to Policy 1.2.7)
 - Transportation (relative to Policy 1.2.7)
 - Bicycling and porous pavement ordinances
 - Definition of decorum and civility (Policy 3.3)
 - Meridian Township “brand” (Policy 1.4.2)
 - Refine Policy 1.5 by further exploration of diversity
- Consultant to provide an abbreviated Robert’s Rules of Order which is appropriate for Policy Governance Boards

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provenchur, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, addressed the issues of conflict of interest, confidentiality, availability of fiscal records, Board civility, and three (3) businesses days for public availability of the Township Board agenda. He also suggested the creation of a Meridian Township Transportation Commission.

Supervisor McGillicuddy closed Public Remarks.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor McGillicuddy adjourned the meeting at 10:10 P.M.

SUSAN McGILLICUDDY
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

MARY M. G. HELMBRECHT, CMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary