

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2022 **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Township Hall Room
TUESDAY, June 7th, 2022 **6:00 pm**

PRESENT: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

ABSENT: Clerk Guthrie, Trustee Wisinski

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, , Chief of Police Plaga, Fire Chief Hamel, Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt, Director of Economic Development Clark, IT Director Gebes, Finance Director Garber, Parks and Recreation Director Maisner, Clerk's Assistant Zachary Lemaster, Multimedia Staff Samantha Diehl

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Jackson called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLLCALL

Clerk's Assistant Lemaster called the roll of the Board. Clerk Guthrie and Trustee Wisinski were absent. All others present.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Haslett Middle School – 2022 Robotics World Champions

Director Clark Introduced Coach Steve and the Haslett Robotics team to the board.

Coach Steve gave a presentation on the Haslett Robotics Club explaining the work he and the teams put into their robots and the awards each team earned. He introduced the B.O.A.T. team, the Zesty Mustache teams, the Flying Phantoms, and the Robots Rule team.

B. Police Candidate Sponsorships – Danny Mora & Jacob Gonzalez

Chief Plaga introduced Danny Mora and Jacob Gonzalez to the board and explained why the Township should sponsor the two.

Danny Mora thanked the board for the opportunity.

Jacob Gonzalez thanked the board for the opportunity.

C. Fire Candidate Sponsorships – Brandon Curling

Chief Hamel Introduced Brandon Curling to the board and explained why the Township should sponsor him.

Brandon Curling thanked the board for their consideration.

D. Special Tribute – Tom Haas, Flags over Meridian

Treasurer Deschaine introduced Tom Haas and members of the Haslett Kiwanis Club.

Andy Such explained what the Flags over Meridian Club does and read a Resolution in tribute to Tom Haas.

Tom Haas thanked the board for this recognition.

E. Okemos Public School New Mascot – John Hood, Superintendent

John Hood gave a presentation on the new Okemos Public School mascot and why the mascot was changed.

F. Severe Weather Awareness & Safety – Protecting our Community – Fire Chief Mike Hamel

Chief Hamel gave a presentation on Severe Weather Awareness and Safety.

G. 2021 Township Audit – Ali Barnes, Yeo & Yeo

Manager Walsh thanked Auditor Ali Barnes, Treasurer Deschaine, Director Garber and Bernie Falkner and presented the findings of the 2021 Audit.

Ali Barnes thanked the Treasurer's Office and Bernadette Falkner for their assistance with the 2021 Audit. She explained she issued a clean opinion to the township. She then presented the 2021 Audit findings. She explained the fund balance has an upward trend and shows an increase of 3 mil in 2021 from 2020. She detailed the water fund, the sewer fund, long term liabilities in pension plans, the MERS plan and the OPEB plan. She then detailed the Governance Letter she issued to the township.

Treasurer Deschaine thanked Ms. Barnes and asked about the material weakness that was noted. He asked if the sewer fund adjustment is partly due to the joint water and sewer system.

Ms. Barnes replied that it's possible as it's a unique system.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Jackson opened Public Remarks at 7:14 pm.

Bill Van Atten, 6193 Towar Ave., East Lansing, MI, spoke against the SIP payment and about how he believes taxes should be spent.

Patty McFee, 5275 Thames Dr., Haslett, MI, spoke about the audit fundings and against the SIP plan.

Terry Goldberg, 5743 Westminster Way., East Lansing, MI, spoke against the SIP plan.

Supervisor Jackson Closed Public remarks at 7:23 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh spoke about people serving the township. He reported Ken Plaga, Chief of Police, has served as Chief for four years and the township for 27 years in September, Tim Schmitt Director of Community and Planning has served one year as of May 17th, Melissa Massie recently hired to help with projects and operations, Amanda Garber a finance director with a CPA joining full time in July, Economic Development Director Amber Clark will have served two years as of September 28th, Mike Hamel served as Fire Chief 4 years as of July 2nd, Abby Tithof has served as Director of Human Resources two years as of August 10th, Zack Lemaster served the Clerk's Office one year today. He reported he understands residents' complaints about the Stimulus Inflationary Plan but he wants to keep the team that he has.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Wilson

- Attended Memorial Day service at Glendale Cemetery

Supervisor Jackson

- There's a lot of Township activities in June and residents should check the website calendar for events

Treasurer Deschaine

- Attended Zoning Board of Appeals on May 18th where new criteria were used successfully
- Tax bills will be coming on July 1st

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Treasurer Deschaine moved to amend the agenda by adding Special Tribute Tom Haas to the Consent Agenda as item 9.D. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

ROLL CALL: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Jackson reviewed the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Sundland moved to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

A. Communications

Trustee Sundland moved that the communications not already assigned for disposition be referred to the Township Manager or Supervisor for follow-up. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

B. Approval of Minutes – May 17th, 2022 Regular Meeting

Trustee Sundland moved to approve and ratify the minutes of May 17th, 2022 Regular Meeting as presented. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

C. Bills

Trustee Sundland moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows: Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

Common Cash	\$	374,557.16
Public Works	\$	565,952.08
Trust & Agency	\$	435.89
Total Checks	\$	940,945.13
Credit Card Transactions 05/12/22 to 06/01/2022	\$	15,148.97
Total Purchases	\$	956,094.10
ACH Payments	\$	831,574.93

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

D. Special Tribute – Resolution honoring Tom Haas

Trustee Sundland moved to recognize Tom Haas through resolution. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS

A. Establishment of a Commercial Rehabilitation District 1655 & 1621 Haslett Road

Supervisor Jackson opened the Public Hearing at 7:32 pm.

Director Clark outlined the Establishment of a Commercial Rehabilitation District 1655 & 1621 Haslett Road for Public Hearing.

There was no public comment at during this hearing.

Supervisor Jackson closed the public hearing at 7:35 pm.

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Establishment of a Commercial Rehabilitation District 1655 & 1621 Haslett Road

Director Clark outlined the Establishment of a Commercial Rehabilitation District 1655 & 1621 Haslett Road for discussion. Explaining the project will freeze the taxable value amount of the development for 10 years.

Trustee Wilson moved to adopt the attached resolution establishing a Commercial Rehabilitation District at 1655 and 1621 Haslett Road as the Haslett Village Square Commercial Rehabilitation District No. 1. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Trustee Wilson spoke about how this area has been blighted for many years and this action provides opportunity to improve the location at no upfront cost to the township.

Treasurer Deschaine shared Trustee Wilsons views and stated the area has fallen apart in the last 30 years. He asked about the brownfield reimbursement costs.

Director Clark estimated 1 million to 1.5 million, but stated it's hard to say without a plan in place at this time.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of this item as it's one of the two areas any board member would like to see rehabilitated.

Supervisor Jackson spoke in support of this item.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

B. Special Use Permit – 22-051 – Bickford House Okemos, 3830 and 3836 Okemos Road – Building > 25,000 square feet

Director Schmitt outlined Special Use Permit 22-051, Bickford House Okemos, 3830 and 3836 Okemos Road for a Building greater than 25,000 square feet for discussion.

Trustee Wilson moved to adopt the resolution approving the request from JV Landlord-Leasing, LLC to expand the building at 3830 Okemos Road onto the property at 3836 Okemos Road and to be greater than 25,000 square feet. Both parcels are zoned RA, Single-Family Medium Density Residential. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item.

Trustee Sundland spoke in support of this item.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of this item and asked if it's common in other communities to require an SUP for a building over 25,000 sq. ft.

Director Schmitt replied that it's not.

Supervisor Jackson asked how long a SUP has been required for a building greater than 25,000 sq. ft.

Director Schmitt replied he's not sure, but most of the code has not been updated since 1974.

Supervisor Jackson asked if it was common for other communities to have this SUP trigger.

Director Schmitt replied no, but larger ones are common at 100,000 sq. ft.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson,
Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

C. Acceptance of 2021 Audit Findings

Manager Walsh outlined the acceptance of 2021 Audit Findings for discussion and spoke about the history of the townships financials and how it has improved from the date he was hired.

Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the 2021 audited financial statements as presented by Yeo & Yeo and extend our appreciation to the aforementioned team members who served the township with distinction. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of this item and thanked Manager Walsh for his work.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item, and asked Director Garber about the comments on Utility Receivables and policy procedures with federal awards.

Director Garber stated she already spoke to staff about utility receivables, and the policy procedures for federal awards should be completed this year.

Treasurer Deschaine thanked the manager for his proactive reaction to the loss of the Finance Director during the Audit.

Trustee Sundland thanked the manager for his work in bringing the current team together.

Supervisor Jackson thanked the Manager and his team for the way they have handled unforeseen circumstances allowing the township to submit the current documents on time.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer
Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

D. American Rescue Plan Funding-1st Round Appropriation

Manager Walsh outlined American Rescue Plan Funding, 1st Round Appropriation for discussion.

Trustee Wilson moved to appropriate the following in American Rescue Plan funds: \$1,300,000 to local roads and \$970,248 for IT infrastructure for the year 2022. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item and stated this item will accelerate the road program and greatly improve the IT infrastructure.

Trustee Hendrickson thanked Manager Walsh and Assistant Manager Opsommer for working to make sure the board could spend additional this money this year on roads.

Manager Walsh spoke to Trustee Hendrickson's points in the last meeting.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of this item and is happy to honor the commitment made to voters in years past in spite of rising inflation. He also spoke to auditors noting the townships IT is out dated.

Supervisor Jackson spoke in support of this item.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Wilson, Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Sundland

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

E. Stimulus Inflationary Payment Program

Manager Walsh outlined the Stimulus Inflationary Payment Program for discussion.

Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve \$400,000 to be disbursed according to the aforementioned scale. This is a one-time appropriation and shall not be considered an annual program. Neither the members of the Township Board or the Township Manager shall receive said payment. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of this item. He stated he understands the viewpoints of residents who would like to see the money spent elsewhere. He stated this money is public good as the staff provide public service.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of this item and stated the item may have been better named employee retention program. He stated his main responsibility is to the taxpayers, however staff cannot serve taxpayers if there are no employees.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item and stated she sees this item as a retention project.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

F. Meeting Attendance Accommodations

The Board stood at ease at 8:25 pm.

The Board resumed business at 8:32 pm.

Manager Walsh outlined Meeting Attendance Accommodations for discussion.

Supervisor Jackson asked if the public will be able to participate in meetings remotely.

Manager Walsh stated the public will be allowed to use zoom to participate in specific meetings.

Trustee Wilson moved to approve the resolution to adopt the Meridian Charter Township electronic meeting accommodations policy. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item as many members of boards and committees have stated they have a hard time making it to meetings.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of this item.

Manager Walsh stated this applies to military members and allows board and commission members to participate in closed sessions.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of this item as he participated in many virtual meetings during COVID-19 lockdown.

Trustee Wilson asked if this will be granted as a blanket ADA exemption to an individual for all meetings they would attend in the future, and if they would need to give advance notice if they will attend virtually.

Director Tithof stated she would work with the individual through the process, and the only way the accommodation would be terminated is if it is no longer necessary.

Trustee Hendrickson asked if a remote meeting be allowable in the case of a joint meeting.

Director Tithof replied it would depend on the meeting and its purpose.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

G. Authorization for Police Candidate Sponsorships

Chief Plaga outlined Authorization for Police Candidate Sponsorships.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to sponsor candidates Danny Mora and Jacob Gonzales to the Mid-Michigan Police Academy fall semester 2022 at Lansing Community College. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of this item.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item and asked when the candidates would be fully brought in.

Chief Plaga replied they would complete the academy by December and then complete the township training program in April.

Supervisor Jackson spoke in support of this item.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

H. Resolution in Recognition of Juneteenth

Supervisor Jackson outlined the Resolution in Recognition of Juneteenth.

Supervisor Jackson moved to approve the resolution in recognition and celebration of Juneteenth. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item.

Supervisor Jackson noted Friday, Saturday, Sunday are community supported activity days.

Manager Walsh stated Saturday at Celebration Theatre, Sunday at the Historic Village and Monday at the Marketplace at noon.

Supervisor Jackson noted event details are available on the Township website.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

I. Resolution in Recognition of LGBTQ Pride Month

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the resolution celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of this item.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of this item.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

J. Resolution to Call for Legislative Action on Gun Violence

Trustee Hendrickson called for a moment of silence to honor the victims of gun violence.

Trustee Hendrickson overviewed the actions he and other board members would like to see the Michigan legislature take and gave statistics on gun violence in America and Michigan.

Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the attached resolution calling the Michigan legislature to action on gun violence prevention legislation. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees
Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

K. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development 22-0014 – 1621 & 1655 Haslett Road (Haslett Village Square) – Set public hearing for July 12th

Director Schmitt outlined Mixed Use Planned Unit Development 22-0014 – 1621 & 1655 Haslett Road (Haslett Village Square) – Set public hearing for July 12th for discussion.

Trustee Wilson moved to set the public hearing for MUPUD 22-014, 1621 and 1655 Haslett Road, Haslett Village Square, for the July 12, 2022 Township Board meeting. Seconded by Trustee Hendrickson.

Treasurer Deschaine thanked the applicant for updated plans on this development.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

L. Authorization for Fire Candidate Sponsorship

Chief Hamel outlined Authorization for Fire Candidate Sponsorship for discussion. He outlined the specifics of the process for board members.

Trustee Wilson moved to approve Meridian Township Fire Department to send Brandon Curling to EMT and Paramedic training by utilizing \$8,602 of the current budget and appropriating \$16,660 over the next two budget years. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item and explained the guarantees behind the program where the applicant must remain employed for 3 years and must pay back the Township if he doesn't complete the program.

Chief Hamal explained how the Township's fire department will support the candidate throughout the process.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Ordinance 2022-10 – Decks in Planned Unit Developments

Director Schmitt outlined Ordinance 2022-10 – Decks in Planned Unit Developments for discussion explaining this item deals with very specific issues with changes to open space that causes a very cumbersome issue for residents at least once a year.

Trustee Hendrickson asked Director Schmitt to describe the scope of this Ordinance so to inform the public which Planned Unit Development will be effected by this.

Supervisor Jackson asked if this would place decks in Planned Unit Developments in the same parameters of single family home decks.

Director Schmitt replied if would make it much closer.

B. Fire Contract Modifications

Manager Walsh outlined Fire Contract Modifications for discussion. He explained this is similar to the changes made to the police contract where the lowest level of the pay scale will be eliminated. He stated the goal is to keep police and fire wages as close as possible. The annual cost of this project will be about \$55,000.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if Meridian Fire Fighters will still be paid less than Lansing Fire Fighters.

Manager Walsh replied this action would make it very close. He outlined the current firefighter benefits.

Trustee Hendrickson asked if there is any expected turnover from the Fire Department.

Manager Walsh replied there is impending turnover.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Jackson Opened Public Remarks at 9:18 pm.

Terry Goldberg, 5743 Westminster Wy., Haslett, MI, spoke about the SIP plan, how taxes are spent, and employee retention.

Patty McFee, 5275 Thames Dr., Haslett, MI, spoke about gun violence and that she feels the schools are secure. She also spoke about the SIP payment and employee compensation.

Bill Van Atten, 6193 Towar Ave., East Lansing, MI, spoke about the mascot change in Okemos Schools, the SIP payment, the fund balance, and wages for township staff.

Supervisor Jackson Closed Public Remarks at 9:27 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS-NONE

16. CLOSED SESSION

Motion to go into a closed session for collective bargaining strategy and a personnel matter under MCL 15.268(1)(c). Successful entry into closed session will require a simple majority approval, though we still recommend a roll call vote. MCL 15.267(1).

Trustee Hendrickson moved to go into a closed session for collective bargaining strategy and a personnel matter under MCL 15.268(1)(c). Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Sundland, Wilson, Supervisor Jackson,
Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

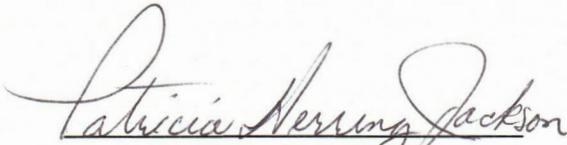
At 9:28 pm the board entered into a closed session.

17. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Wilson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 5-0

Supervisor Jackson adjourned the meeting at 10:10 pm.


PATRICIA H. JACKSON,
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR


DEBORAH GUTHRIE
TOWNSHIP CLERK