

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2022 **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Township Hall Room
TUESDAY, January 25th, 2022 **6:00 pm**

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

ABSENT: Supervisor Styka

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Fire Chief Hamel, Chief of Police Plaga, Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt, Human Resources Director Tithof, IT Director Gebes, Parks and Recreation Director Maisner, Economic Development Director Clark

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Clerk Guthrie called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

Trustee Wisinski moved to have Trustee Opsommer serve as Supervisor Pro-Tem for the meeting. Supported by Trustee Jackson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Sundland, Wisinski, Opsommer, Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Clerk Guthrie
NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board.

All members present except Supervisor Styka.

4. PRESENTATION

A. 2022 Township Local Roads Program

Deputy Manager Perry provided an overview of the 2021 Local Roads Program and a look forward to the 2022 Local Roads Program. This is year three of the ten year program. In 2021, 8.87 miles of road were resurfaced and 9.11 miles of road were preserved. In 2022, the plan is to resurface 6.84 miles of road and preserve 3.74 miles of road.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer opened public remarks at 6:34 pm

Craig Patterson, 115 Huron St. Mackinaw City; Support Woodward Way PILOT

Supervisor Pro Tem Opsommer closed public remarks at 6:34 pm

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported the following items:

- Annual Deer Cull-265 deer total; 63 to go for our goal
- Black History Month-working on an event to celebrate current and past achievements
- Prime Meridian Magazine will be coming out in the next 6 weeks
- Met with Okemos Superintendent John Hood regarding the Senior Center
- Staff had a DEI training through Michigan State University
- Bonding on years 4, 5, and 6 of the Local Road Program
- Annual Report will be presented at the February 15th Board meeting
- Directors Clark and Schmitt are working with a developer for the remaining acres of the Haslett Village Square Project
- Concerns regarding the ice at the new ice rink, a potential fix was applied to the ice this week
- Congratulations to Director Gebes for his 30 year anniversary on Thursday

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clerk Guthrie reported the following items:

- Attended a webinar regarding election security risks
- Attended the Okemos School Board meeting and they announced the new school mascot, the wolves
- Attended the Friends of Okemos Library meeting; Sale on March 5-6
- Meridian Conservation Corp is having an event this Saturday, January 29th at Ted Black Woods
- Attended the Park Commission meeting and impressed with the five year Parks Plan

Treasurer Deschaine reported the following items:

- Held a Capital Area Treasurer Association training
- Attended the DEI training through Michigan State University

Trustee Wisinski reported the following items:

- National Wetland Day is February 2nd, doing a wetland protection education program
- Request for proposals for \$10,000 in Green Grants were distributed to the schools yesterday
- Environmental Commission is working on the five year Sustainability Plan Update

Trustee Opsommer reported the following:

Recap on the Open Meetings Act at the State level to allow for remote meetings. After December 31st you can only participate remotely if you are on active duty with the military. There are other bills on the table to try to allow remote meetings further. He states that other State committees are meeting virtually for discussion purposes only without voting virtually.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer offered the following changes to the agenda. Move item 12D- Poverty Exemption Guidelines to after the approval of the agenda and move item 12J- Woodward Way PILOT to the top of the action items.

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

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer reviewed the Consent Agenda.

Treasurer Jackson moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS-NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Appointment of Supervisor Pro-Tem

Treasurer Deschaine moved that the Board appoint, through December 31, 2022, Trustee Jackson to act as Supervisor Pro-Tem at any meeting of the Township Board wherein the Supervisor is absent. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Treasurer Deschaine and Trustee Wisinski spoke in support of Trustee Jackson serving as Supervisor Pro-Tem.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

B. Township Manager Performance Review

Trustee Wisinski moved to approve the 2021 Township Manager's performance review as presented. The review document shall be forwarded to the Human Resource office for proper filing. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Treasurer Deschaine and Trustee Jackson stated that the evaluation was easy to do and the Board expressed their high level of satisfaction with the Manager.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer read the summary of the performance review.

Trustee Wisinski reported on the Manager's excellent customer service on a holiday.

Manager Walsh thanked the Board for the evaluation and stated he enjoys the people he works with and loves his job.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

C. Township Manager Employment Agreement-Amendment

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer stated the following:

Based on an annual performance review, on December 14, 2021, the Township Board unanimously approved extending the Township Manager's contract through December 31, 2024.

The approved language under Section 5 (C) states that "the Employer shall provide the Township Manager an annual payment of \$8,300 into a Health Savings Account (HSA)." Given the Manager's annual salary of \$148,910, the 6% equates to an annual payment of \$8,934.60. The maximum annual HSA contribution allowed under federal guidelines is \$8,300. Therefore, the approved contractual amount exceeds federal guidelines.

The contract amendment to Section 5 (C) would change the 6% to the lower amount of \$8,300, which would meet federal guidelines for annual HSA contributions.

Trustee Jackson moved to amend the January 1, 2022-December 31, 2024 Township Manager's contract to modify section 5 (c) by eliminating "an annual payment of 6%" to "an annual payment of \$8,300." Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Clerk Guthrie offered a friendly amendment to change the “annual payment of \$8,300” to the “annual payment of the maximum allowed,” in case the maximum changes.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer stated we do update the contract annually so there will be an opportunity to look at this again next year.

Clerk Guthrie offered to remove her amendment and mentioned that this might be something to consider for the future.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

D. Poverty Exemption Guidelines

Trustee Jackson moved to approve the 2022 income and asset limits for 100% and 50% Poverty Exemptions as follows: households with income and assets at or below 1.35 times the federal guidelines are eligible for a 100% exemption; households with income or assets above 1.35 times the federal guidelines, but with income and assets at or below 1.85 times the federal guidelines are eligible for 50% exemptions. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer explained that this is a scaled down version that was discussed at the previous meeting.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

E. Communications Commission Appointment

Trustee Sundland moved to approve the appointment of Lisa Whiting Dobson to the Communications Commission for a term ending 12/31/2024. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Trustee Sundland remarked that Ms. Dobson has an excellent background in digital media and will be an excellent addition to the Communications Commission.

Clerk Guthrie mentioned that Ms. Dobson has been working with the HOMTV Internship Program for years and helped to rewrite the program years ago.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

F. Board of Review Appointments

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer thanked Diane Federau and Martha Bashore for their service to the Communications Commission.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the appointment of Michael Nussdorfer to the Board of Review for a term ending 12/31/2022. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the appointment of Christopher Silker to the Board of Review, as an alternate, for a term ending 12/31/2022. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Treasurer Deschaine stated the essential function of the Board of Review is for citizens to address any issues with their property taxes.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer mentioned that the Township does have openings on Boards and Commissions, including the Zoning Board of Appeals. If citizens are interested, please go to the Township website and fill out an application for public service.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

G. 5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2022-2026

Director Maisner presented the draft plan of the Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2022-2026. In order to maintain eligibility for state and federal grants administered through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), communities must have a Parks and Recreation Master Plan on file and updated every five years. This document serves as a planning tool for future development opportunities based on community input, current uses and future trends.

Trustee Wisinski moved to approve the attached resolution of support to adopt the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2022-2026 as a guideline for improving Parks and Recreation facilities and services for the residents of Meridian Township and to authorize its submission to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for state and federal grant eligibility. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

Trustee Wisinski congratulated Director Maisner on her excitement, her staff, Park Commission, and residents. Also, mentioned the improvements in accessibility and new signage at the Parks. Discussion was had on hosting smaller cultural events during COVID-19.

Discussion about the need to get the second recreation position back that the department had pre-COVID-19 as programming needs increase.

Clerk Guthrie echoed Trustee Wisinski's comments. Discussion was had regarding accessibility in Parks. Recommendation regarding doing push notifications on Facebook for Parks events.

Treasurer Deschaine stated the last five years have been outstanding and thanks to Director Maisner and the Park Commission.

Trustee Jackson congratulated Director Maisner, Staff and the Park Commission on the Plan and the involvement of residents.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer thanked Director Maisner and Chief Plaga regarding the deer management program. Discussion regarding future growth of the Farmers' Market vendors, restroom facilities at Hillbrook Park, and additional pickleball courts.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

H. Resolution Commemorating Black History Month

Trustee Wisinski moved to approve the resolution commemorating black history month. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Trustee Wisinski made a suggestion that the Township adopt activities for black history month.

Treasurer Deschaine read the following part of the resolution:

WHEREAS, Since 2015, the Meridian Township Board has adopted a recurring commitment to increased diversity in all aspects of Township function, and specifically in it's "Board Goals and Objectives"; and

WHEREAS, In November 2016, Patricia Herring Jackson, became the first African American female elected to the Township Board, as a Trustee.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, that Meridian Township commemorates Black History Month to pay tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity and to celebrate the accomplishments, contributions, and history of African Americans.

Manager Walsh stated that the staff is working on a plan for activities to commemorate black history month.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer mentioned that diversity has been a focus for the Township and we have made great strides in diversity, specifically with the Police Department.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: 6

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

I. Resolution to Approve Ballot Language

Manager Walsh stated the resolution has been approved by counsel and reviewed by Clerk Guthrie. This involves the August 2, 2022 ballot language on recreational marihuana.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the attached Resolution that the following ballot language be placed on the August 2, 2022 regular election ballot by the Ingham County Clerk. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
INITIATION OF ORDINANCE TO
PROHIBIT ADULT-USE MARIHUANA ESTABLISHMENTS**

Shall the Charter Township of Meridian, under the authority of Section 6, Subsection 1 of the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act, Initiated Law 1 of 2018 ("MRTMA"), MCL 333.27956.1, adopt the following initiated ordinance that completely prohibits adult-use (also known as "recreational") marihuana establishments as defined in Section 3(i) of MRTMA, MCL 333.27953(i), within the boundaries of the Township: "All adult-use (also known as 'recreational') marihuana establishments as defined in Section 3(i) of the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act, Initiated Law 1 of 2018, are prohibited within the boundaries of the Charter Township of Meridian."

Yes ___

No ___

Trustee Deschaine mentioned that this was brought by a citizens' group and not by the Board.

Clerk Guthrie mentioned her office will verify signatures and get it to Ingham County. Also, the paragraph numbers were the only thing that changed. The August 2, 2022 is designated as a regular election because we had nothing on the November 2021 ballot.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

J. Woodward Way PILOT

Trustee Wisinski moved to adopt the resolution to grant tax exempt status with Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for the housing project known as Woodward Way. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Director Schmitt stated that nothing has changed with the project that was approved in 2019, but they are in need of the extension due to COVID-19 delays. Mr. Patterson expressed his thanks to the Board for all the support for this project.

Trustee Jackson asked what is the expected completion date for the project. Mr. Patterson stated they are hopeful for a late December completion.

Treasurer Deschaine and Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer stated this project will be a great addition for affordable family housing in our community.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

K. Nomination of Trustee Herring Jackson-Ingham County Broadband Task Force

Trustee Wisinski moved to appoint Trustee Patricia Herring Jackson to serve as Meridian Township's representative on the Ingham County Broadband Task Force. The appointment is contingent of approval of Ingham County Officials. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Manager Walsh stated that Supervisor Styka did submit a letter to Ingham County and Meridian Township was the first community to respond. Trustee Jackson has an interview scheduled on February 1st with Ingham County.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Recertification

Director Clark stated that MEDC announced an update to the RRC program that aligns with the Township's update to the Master Plan. The updated program has a new series of requirements for communities to remain fully engaged in the RRC program. Included in the packet is the instructional brief provided by MEDC that notes the Best Practice Criteria to maintain an active RRC status by 2023.

Treasurer Deschaine commented on the original certification process. Director Clark is confident that the recertification process will be complete in two years.

Trustee Jackson asked if this process is still worthwhile to pursue. Directors Clark and Schmitt mentioned that the MEDC may be of assistance on a variety of Township projects and will be looking for communities to be RRC certified to get assistance. It is well worth the time and will help us to market our development sites. Also, much of the information will be included in our Master Plan. Trustee Jackson expressed concern over required zoning changes as part of the RRC recertification process.

B. Township Emergency Plan Update

Fire Chief Hamel stated this is just the annual update in names for the Plan. Clerk Guthrie mentioned her concern for emergency plans related to Election Day. Chief Hamel mentioned that would not be a part of this Plan, but rather, a Special Event Plan for Election Day.

Clerk Guthrie moved to suspend the rules to approve the Township Emergency Plan Update, as presented. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: 6
NAYS: None
Motion carried: 6-0

Trustee Jackson moved to approve the Township Emergency Plan Update, as presented. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Wisinski, Sundland, Clerk Guthrie
NAYS: None
Motion carried: 6-0

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-NONE

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine mentioned on February 4, 2022 the Xavier DeGroat Autism Foundation is hosting a launch event at Meridian Mall.

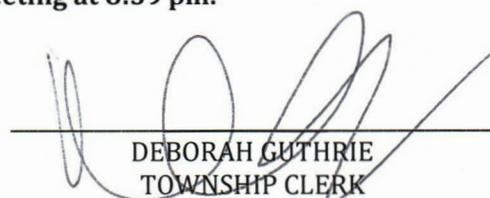
16. ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 6-0

Supervisor Pro-Tem Opsommer adjourned the meeting at 8:59 pm.


PATRICIA H.
JACKSON, SUPERVISOR
PRO-TEM


DEBORAH GUTHRIE
TOWNSHIP CLERK