

Abigail Tithof

From: Deborah Guthrie
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 12:21 PM
To: Abigail Tithof
Subject: Letter to LOCC regarding Salaries

Dear Director Tithof and Local Officials Compensation Commission Members;

One of the reasons I ran for office is to fix what is broken in the Clerk's Office. This included record retention, election administration, social inclusion and being a restructuring the office provide better customer service and be a positive brand ambassador for the township.

These were the biggest complaints I received feedback from constituents in regards to what they wanted from their Clerk and the Clerk's Office. In order to do that, I needed to get elected to the Clerk's position which is not only an elected position who has a vote on the Township Board but is also a Director position. This position of Clerk has the same requirements as each Director employed by Meridian Township to serve the public; oversee staff, payroll, manage a department, attend staff meetings, work interdepartmentally, collaborate on projects, set annual goals and action plans, create annual reports, manage a budget, represent the township at various functions and township events, be a positive brand ambassador for the community and represent the township on various committees and boards.

Not only am I a voting member of the Meridian Township Board but I also sit am the liaison to the Community Resources Commission, Communications Commission, Friends of Okemos Library, Pension Board and oversee the Election Commission. In addition, I sit on work committees to accomplish the 2021 Township Goals; Assess Broadband, Lake Lansing Connector, Website, MERS Pension. The Township Clerk is an integral part of the M Team, as is the Treasurer and have the same duties and responsibilities as all other Directors. This is why in 2012 when Commissioner Amy Holda was the HR Manager and I was the HOMTV Manager, the Township Board approval out two positions to Director positions because we performed the exact same duties as all the other directors.

Like my counterparts, I too create an annual list of goals for the departments. Just today I met with the Deputy Township Manager Derek Perry and Facilities Manager Rob MacKenzie to look into improving accessibility at our polling locations; which is one of our goals. The goals for the Clerk's Office the Township Clerk oversees for 2021 are:

- Resolve Election Administrative issues
- Create greater confidence in the electoral process with voters
- Resolve Record Retention issues and develop a record retention schedule
- Resolve FOIA Record issues and create processes and tracking mechanisms
- Resolve codification issues and create a processes for resolutions and amended ordinances to be managed better and in a more timely fashion
- Create an election retention schedule and election budget
- Improve customer service out of the Clerk's Office
- Create a better work flow and office environment

While MCL 41.69 requires the Township Clerk to be bonded and MCL 41.65 dictates the statutory requirements of the Charter Township Clerk and MCL 42.9 describes the duties of the Clerk, the daily Director work required of a Clerk is not dictated by state statute but is a Meridian Township requirement for Department Directors. While the Commission may not be able to find an apples to apples comparison or may find it difficult to compare with other communities, this commission knows the pay rate of Meridian Township Directors.

Not only that, but because of the Passage of Statewide Proposition 3 in November 2018, Michigan has experienced changes to election administration including the implementation of same-day registration and automatic voter registration, and no-excuse absentee balloting. In addition, the constitution was amended to include post-election auditing requirements.

While statutory requirements are the same for Charter Township Clerks, for comparison sake in regards to management and work load for elections in Ingham County:

- Meridian is one of only five jurisdictions in the County who conducts their own Risk Limiting Audit.
- Meridian Township runs School elections for Okemos and Haslett Public School District and any portions that lie within Meridian for school special elections.
- Meridian has the second largest number of registered voters in the county at over 30,000.
- Meridian had the second highest number of voter turnout in 2018 behind the city of Lansing with 21,370 votes cast.
- Meridian has the second highest number of precincts behind City of Lansing with 19 Precincts.
- In 2020, Meridian had 33,980 registered voters and 21,912 votes cast in 19 precincts while East Lansing had 23,867 registered voters in 16 precincts with 13,948 votes cast.
- The City of East Lansing has five full time staff members in their Clerk's Office; including the Clerk. Meridian Township has four.
- The State of Michigan has 1,240 townships varying from 1,240 people to 100,000 people. – 2010 Census with Meridian being the 40th largest city/township in the state.
- Since the 2010 Census, Meridian increased in size by 6.7%.
- There are over 8 million registered voters in the State of Michigan.
- Ingham County has the 8th largest number of registered voters at 215,014.
- Meridian Township registered voters in Ingham is almost 32,000.

So while it is good to have an understanding of the volume of registered voters in Meridian Township that the Clerk's Office serves, it is also good to have an understanding of the size of Meridian Township, the services it provides and the requirements of the elected positions to understand the correct pay compensation and staffing levels. Not only is Meridian Township one of the larger communities providing many services cities provide, it is also one of the largest voting districts and requires the Clerk to not only be an election official but a Director of Department to service those needs. I hope this helps in making your decision for the equity in pay across all departments with all directors. I would say the same for any other position.

Thank you, Deborah



A Prime Community

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