

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2021 **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Township Hall Room
TUESDAY, November 2nd, 2021 **6:00 pm**

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

ABSENT: None

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLLCALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board.

All members are present.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Introduction of Police Sponsorship Candidate-Isabela Acker

Chief Plaga introduced Police Sponsorship Candidate Isabela Acker to the board.

Isabela Acker thanked the board for their time and consideration. She stated that she looks forward to beginning her relationship with Meridian Township.

Trustee Jackson congratulated Chief Plaga for his aggressive recruitment strategy.

B. Enhanced Township Website

Manager Yates presented the enhanced township website to the board.

Trustee Jackson asked if anything will be discontinued on the new site.

Manager Yates replied that nothing has been taken away, only moved.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:20 pm

NONE

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:20 pm

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh called Deputy Manager Perry to the podium.

Deputy Manager Perry reported in 2022 the Michigan Department of Transportation will be resurfacing a section of Grand River. Further he reported the intersection of Okemos Rd. and Grand River Rd. will be raised by almost two feet due to drainage issues. Detours and delays should be expected during the construction of this project.

Two meetings on this topic will be held in the Town Hall room Thursday November 4th. The first will be held at noon, and the other at 4PM.

As of now construction is projected to last one year.

Manager Walsh reported a new planner is close to being hired. Should the position be filled the township will be at 97% employment. Manager Walsh stated the Williamstown contract is up a year from now and the board should begin thinking about it. He thanked the Police and Fire department for their work on the Michigan State-University of Michigan game. The board has set a date of December 11th for annual goal setting, the packet will be available December 3rd. The Pine Village Brownfield demolition project has elapsed the time allotted for interest payback. He suggested reoffering the interest rate to the developer if work is completed during a four-month window. The IT assessment is underway. The farmers market will continue through November on Saturdays. The local road project is moving forward, despite some issues. Some roads will not be worked on this year, but they will be first on list for 22. The 8th annual teambuilding event is this Friday. CBL Properties, owner of the Meridian Mall have come out of chapter 11.

Trustee Opsommer asked Chief Plaga for more information on the Williamstown contract.

Manager Walsh stated he would have a firmer understanding in four-five months.

Chief Plaga stated he has three other candidates he's looking at, but that he won't have a good idea of his resources for several months.

Trustee Opsommer asked if any of the other candidates qualify for the sponsorship for the academy.

Chief Plaga stated the candidates are in background check.

Manager Walsh stated many jurisdictions are offering sign-on bonuses to potential officers.

Clerk Guthrie asked if any relocation services have been offered to candidates.

Manager Walsh stated they have not, however he will consider it.

Trustee Opsommer stated township officers must pay back to the township the cost of the academy if they leave before three years of service. He further stated officers are fully vested in their pension by five years.

Manager Walsh stated if an officer doesn't stay 25 years they don't receive a pension.

Trustee Opsommer stated Williamstown Township is in financial hardship due to their smaller tax base and that should be considered when looking at the contract.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Styka

- Thanked Julie Brixie and Trustee Opsommer for their work on the \$225,000 grant for a firetruck
- Yesterday was the beginning of Native American heritage month.

Clerk Guthrie

- Thanked her staff for running the Clerk's department in her absence
- Thanked the Fire Department for helping her mother

Treasurer Deschaine

- Attended November 20th CATA Board meeting
- Attending Economic Development Corporation this Thursday with Trustee Sundland
- On page 43 of the packet you can find information on delinquent payments in the township

Trustee Wisinski

- Attending Ground Water Management workgroup meeting on Monday
- The Environmental Commission has sent a letter and brochure to residents living near wetlands and many have called to thank the township for the educational material
- The Energy Team is looking at solar options in Meridian
- The Environmental Commission is partnering with Meridian Cares for a coat drive on November 20th at the marketplace on the green

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Styka reviewed the Consent Agenda.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. 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

A. Communications

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Approval of Minutes – October 19, 2021 Regular Meeting

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve and ratify the minutes of October 19, as presented. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. Bills

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows: Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Common Cash	\$	631,937.52
Public Works	\$	19,600.46
Trust & Agency	\$	<u>261.95</u>
Total Checks	\$	651,799.93

Credit Card Transactions 09/16/2021 to 09/29/2021	\$	13,061.58
Total Purchases	\$	<u>644,861.51</u>
ACH Payments	\$	<u>490,460.85</u>

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

D. Placement of Delinquent Special Assessments, Delinquent Utilities, Delinquent False Alarms, Unpaid Mowing & Code Violations and Misc. Fees on the Winter Tax Roll for 2021

Treasurer Deschaine moved to assess the charges identified I the staff memorandum with parcel identification available in the Treasurer’s Office dated November 2, 2021 for delinquent Special Assessments, Utility Bills, False Alarms, Nuisance, Lot Mowing/Code Violation, and Misc. Fees as a tax lien against the subject properties as authorized by Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 41.727, 41.728, and Meridian Township Ordinance Code Sections 58-32, 58-33, 78- 98, 78-155, 46-5, 82-27, 18-1, and 18-15. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS-NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Rezoning #21-070 – 5114 Jo Don Drive – Rezone north half of property from RCC, Multiple Family – Maximum 34 dwelling units per acre, to RB, Single-Family, High Density-**Introduction**

Trustee Opsommer moved to adopt the resolution approving for introduction Rezoning #21070 to rezone the north half of an approximately 0.42-acre parcel located at 5114 Jo Don Drive from RCC (Multiple Family-maximum 34 dwelling units per acre) to RB (Single Family, High Density). Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Trustee Opsommer briefly discussed the purpose of the Rezoning.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. 2022 Board Meeting Schedule Resolution

Supervisor Styka outlined the 2022 Board Meeting Schedule Resolution.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adopt the 2022 township board meeting schedule resolution. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Town Hall Room A/V Upgrades

Manager Yates outlined the Town Hall Room A/V Upgrades for the board.

Trustee Opsommer asked if there has been any input for conference call equipment to be added to the Town Hall Room.

Manager Yates stated audio is included in the project, but she will double check.

Trustee Jackson asked if there is any coordination between this project and the IT project.

Manager Yates replied no.

Director Gebes stated the IT project is involved with addressing IT in the building, while this project is focused on improving HOMTV's capabilities.

Trustee Wisinski and Clerk Guthrie asked about making the Town Hall Room more ADA compliant.

Manager Yates replied ADA compliance is always on the forefront of Communications minds.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if there would be software to help viewers follow along with board meeting.

Manager Yates replied not as a part of this project, but it is possible to look at in the future.

B. Township Signage

Deputy Manager Perry outlined Township Signage explaining the various potential locations around the township.

Trustee Opsommer asked if this project has been budgeted for.

Manager Walsh replied no, but the general fund can cover it.

Trustee Opsommer stated he would like to see wayfinding done at the different locations at the same time as it's more cost effective.

Supervisor Styka stated he would prefer to see electronic signs with yellow text as it's easier to read.

Treasurer Deschaine stated he believes visitors use the Central Drive entrance more often than Marsh road and a sign should be there.

Trustee Jackson asked Director Schmitt if he has looked at the dimensions and design of the new signs and if they are in compliance with current Ordinance.

Director Schmitt suggested the township exempt its' own signs from the sign Ordinance.

Clerk Guthrie agreed with a farmers market sign, and would like to see staff not having to continue to put up vinyl signs. She asked if signs up at the land preservation are paid for.

Manager Walsh stated the signs are paid for by the land preservation fund.

Clerk Guthrie asked what the cost would be if land preservation were to change its name.

Deputy Manager Perry stated he would have to ask the manufacturer.

Trustee Opsommer asked which signs would be two sided.

Deputy Manager Perry stated Municipal Campus identification signs, signs when leaving or entering the township, or any sign that can be viewed from both sides.

C. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Ordinance Update

Director Schmitt outlined the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Ordinance Update.

Trustee Opsommer discussed the amenity system with the board and Director Schmitt.

Trustee Wisinski stated developers used to have to come to the Planning Commission and the Township Board and now it only states one.

Director Schmitt clarified that only applies to the conceptual review.

Trustee Wisinski asked what the reasoning is for removing the Environmental Commission and the School Board from the review process.

Director Schmitt stated that he believes this was removed because these bodies may weigh in on projects in other ways.

Trustee Wisinski asked how the bodies would be able to weigh in if it's not in the Ordinance.

Director Schmitt stated an example would be if there was a wetland impact the Environmental Commission could weigh in.

Supervisor Styka asked if the Ordinance would take out the requirement to go through the Environmental Commission.

Director Schmitt stated in the MUPUD Ordinance a future MUPUD would not need to go through the Environmental Commission.

Supervisor Styka stated he doesn't understand why the Planning Commission would remove the Environmental Commission and that if anything the Environmental Commission should be involved as much as possible.

Trustee Opsommer stated that he doesn't want to see every developer use the art amenity while disregarding the others.

Clerk Guthrie agreed with Trustee Wisinski's point of keeping the Environmental Commission included. She then asked about a section that has been stricken from the definition of an extraordinary amenity.

Director Schmitt stated that it depends on the development. He further stated the Planning Commission's intent is to not create too strict of guidelines for developers.

Clerk Guthrie asked if there was confusion with previous amenity language.

Trustee Opsommer stated the goal is to make it so applicants can't just use the easiest cheapest amenities that the township has come to expect from every project.

Trustee Opsommer suggested a straw poll on striking the Environmental Commission and forcing developers to use two three point amenities in downtown Okemos and Haslett.

A straw poll found the board in favor of keeping the Environmental Commission in the MUPUD Ordinance.

Director Schmitt clarified the Meridian Mall is being added to the two downtown areas.

A second straw poll found the board in favor of requiring developers to provide two, three point amenities in downtown Haslett, Okemos and in the Meridian Mall.

Supervisor Styka asked for this come back for final adoption.

Trustee Opsommer stated he would like to see a traffic study done at 250 expected visits a day.

D. Appreciation Pay

Supervisor Styka Called Manager Walsh to the Podium.

Manager Walsh outlined his plan for staff recruitment and retention.

The Board and Manager Walsh discussed a number of topics concerning appreciation pay including but not limited to:

- How to create equity in showing staff appreciation
- Meridian Township's history of incentivizing staff
- A plan to increase base pay by 1% as well as giving eight Fridays off in January and February to all Non-Police and Fire staff and increase the base pay by 1.5% for Police and Fire in 2022
- The possibility of a one-time \$1,000 payment from the board to all current staff to show appreciation in 2021
- A \$1,000 retention payment in December of 2022 for all staff working in the township from September 2021 to December 2022
- Police and Fire will have receive different bonuses from Non-Police and Fire personnel because of the eight Fridays the Township is closed
- The effects of rising inflation
- The positive and negatives of working from home
- Compensating staff during years that the Township realizes a large increase in tax base

Manager Walsh stated Director Tithof played a large part in the current plan for staff appreciation.

Supervisor Styka stated the board formally adopted policy governance in the past. He explained the board sets the policy and the manager carries it out. He stated the board cannot give out bonuses to staff, other than maybe in the budget. He stated the policy is to have a well-paid staff and to retain that staff. He stated he does not believe any action should be take on this item.

Trustee Wisinski stated she appreciates the effort put into this proposed plan but is concerned about how some staff may have to come in on Fridays, while police and fire are guaranteed an extra .5% and why the groups are receiving different benefits.

Supervisor Styka stated during his time as a school board member he listened to a speech about equity. He stated that fairness and equity is not giving the same thing to every employee but giving each employee what they want.

Clerk Guthrie stated she appreciates the work put into this by Manager Walsh and Director Tithof. She believes that Meridian Township has been very flexible with employee time especially when it comes to family.

Clerk Guthrie moved to suspend the rules and take action on this tonight. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Board members and Manager Walsh discussed budget concerns including the proposed award of the appreciation pay of \$1,000 in 2021 and the base pay increase of 1% for non-Police and Fire staff for 2022.

Clerk Guthrie stated she will table the motion if Manager Walsh will provide information on paper at the next meeting.

Manager Walsh stated he would provide the information.

Clerk Guthrie has withdrawn the previous motion at this time. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Treasurer Deschaine specified he and Clerk Guthrie would not gain benefits from this.

Manager Walsh also stated he would not be participating in this plan.

Trustee Opsommer clarified the 1% increase would cost \$110,000 for the employees in 2021.

Trustee Wisinski thanked the manager for what he has come up with and stated the point of this is to provide equity in retaining township employees as well what can be offered to recruit employees.

E. Police Candidate Sponsorship

Chief of Police Plaga outlined the Police Candidate Sponsorship.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to suspend the rules and take action on this tonight. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Treasurer Deschaine moved to sponsor candidate Isabela Acker to the Mid-Michigan Police Academy Spring Semester 2022 at Lansing Community College. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 9:26 pm.

NONE

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 9:26 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Opsommer

- Would like to see a commitment from the developers of the Pine Village Brownfield Project to hire local union labor as part of reoffering the interest rates

Director Clark stated under the current plan the interest schedule started September 1st. They had until November 1st to complete demolition or interest would no longer be a reimbursable expense.

Supervisor Styka asked the board if they understood the concept of reoffering the prior interest rate in return for Pine Village Brownfield Developers hiring local union labor.

A straw poll of the board found that all members did.

Clerk Guthrie

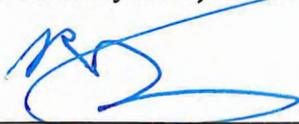
- Thanked Deputy Manager Perry for filling in for her for the road commission meeting.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 7-0

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 9:36 pm.



RONALD J. STYKA,
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR



DEBORAH GUTHRIE
TOWNSHIP CLERK