

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2017 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works and Engineering Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Police Chief David Hall, Finance Director Miriam Mattison, Director of Information and Technology Stephen Gebes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Lake Lansing SAD Renewal

Director of Public Works & Engineering Derek Perry introduced the Chair of the Advisory Committee which oversees the referenced special assessment district.

Curtis Armbruster, Chair of the Lake Lansing SAD Advisory Committee, offered the following:

- Distinction between Tier 1 and Tier 2 properties
- History of the SAD which was established in 1998
- Management plan updated in 2008
- Request is for another ten (10) year renewal
- Advisory Committee's goal is to maintain and improve the environmental quality of Lake Lansing and its watershed
- Various functions performed with funds acquired through the SAD

B. Six Month Performance Report for 2017

Township Manager Walsh discussed, in depth, the six month performance report.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Larry Wagenknecht, 6097 Partridge Street, Haslett, spoke in support of the renewal of the Lake Lansing SAD.

Bruce Little, 5015 Meridian Road, Williamston, spoke in opposition to the August 8, 2017 Police and Fire Millage.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, voiced appreciation for the pathway which now ends in an ADA compliant curb cut on Park Lake Road, the success of the Celebrate Meridian event, apprehension in posting a list of vacant homes in the Board packet, and his belief there are sufficient levels of police staffing.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, clarified authorship of the letter from LINC contained in the Board packet, requested the Board "weigh in" on the proposed East Lansing income tax question and noted his appreciation to Building Inspector Richard Bolek for his professionalism and helpfulness.

Ann Alchin, 5972 Cypress, Haslett, voiced her concerns about the millage proposal.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT (None)

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Brixie reported on the Township Blood Drive on July 7, 2017 from 10:00 A.M. until 3:45 P.M. in the Town Hall Room, her attendance at the last Land Preservation Advisory Board, and her attendance at the Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club swearing-in ceremony for Manager Walsh, who has agreed to be its President.

Trustee Deschaine reported on his attendance at the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) meeting, which discussed mini grants for store front façade improvements, and that Chris Buck, Chair of the EDC, has taken a temporary contract position as the Township's Economic Development Coordinator.

Clerk Dreyfus reported on his attendance at the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks Conference, which included information on new election equipment, training election inspectors on the new equipment and changes in election law. He also reported attendance at the June 14th Groundwater Management Board meeting, where management and safety of septic systems, point-of-sale (POS) inspections, well contamination and drain creek improvements were discussed, and attendance at the Celebrate Meridian event.

The Clerk expressed concerns about the 2017 Capital Area Transportation Authority's Community Report which did not include the challenging issues facing CATA and the communities it serves, and the extensive edits and deletions of the June 6th minutes at the June 20th Board meeting, proposed by a single Board member.

The Clerk announced the 8th and Final Art Show & Sale on Saturday, July 8th from 10:00 A.M. until 3:30 P.M. at the Meridian Stratford Senior Facility, with proceeds to be donated to the Lansing Food Bank, that 2,260 absentee voter ballots for the August 8th Police and Fire Millage proposal will be mailed at the end of the week, and July 10th is the deadline to register to vote in the August 8th election and August 5th is the deadline to request a mailed absentee voter ballot for the August 8th election.

Trustee Opsommer reported on his attendance at the June 21st CATA Board meeting, that CATA will host a listening session to solicit public input for the CEO search on July 31st from 7:00 P.M. until 8:30 P.M. at the Hannah Community Center, that CATA used a request for proposal (RFP) process to select an executive search firm to aid the CEO Search Committee in making a selection, that CATA has released its lengthy forensic accounting reports and that CATA has retained a new auditing firm.

Supervisor Styka reported on his attendance at a session where the Chamber of Commerce committee met and interacted with local governments, the June 22nd Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) meeting, the June 26th Downtown Development Authority (DDA) meeting, and

at presentations given to the Haslett School Board and at the Meridian Senior Center by the Manager, Police Chief and Fire Chief regarding the August 8th Police and Fire Millage proposal. He further stated changes to the June 6th Board minutes were consistent with the adopted Board policy earlier this year.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

A. Communications

(1) Board Information (BI)

- BI-1 Steven Vagnozzi, 2144 Woodfield Drive, Okemos; RE: Stand with Planned Parenthood
- BI-2 Neil Bowlby, President, Liaison for Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation, PO Box 40, Okemos; RE: Upcoming Police/Fire Millage Proposal
- BI-3 Gaia McCurdy, 5458 Okemos Road, East Lansing; RE: Okemos Road Speed Limit
- BI-4 Mehboob Fatteh, 3615 Beechtree, Okemos; RE: Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting Issues Of June 28, 2017
- BI-5 Carol Trojanowski, 5653 Ventura Place, Haslett; RE: Dangerous tree on the northwest corner of Hillview and Haslett Road

(2) Regional Linkage

- RL-1 Clyde Dugan, Manager, East Lansing-Meridian Water & Sewer Authority, 2470 Burcham Drive, East Lansing; RE: Annual Board of Trustees Meeting Invitation
- RL-2 Ingham County Clerk Byrum, Mason Courthouse, 341 S. Jefferson, Mason; RE: Election Equipment Open House on June 23, 2017 at 10:00 A.M.

(3) On File in the Clerk's Office (OF)

Material handed out at the June 20, 2017 Board Meeting

- Josh Church, 1749 Hunstville Drive, Apt. F, Haslett; RE: Endorsement of the resolution in support of the Paris Climate Accord
- Mary Ann Idzikowski, 3809 Hemmingway Drive, Okemos; RE: Endorsement of the resolution in support of the Paris Climate Accord
- Paul and Judy Kindel, 2915 Margate Lane, East Lansing; RE: Endorsement of the resolution in support of the Paris Climate Accord

Treasurer Brixie moved that the communications be received and placed on file, and any communications not already assigned for disposition be referred to the Township Manager or Supervisor for follow-up. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried unanimously.

B. Minutes

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the June 20, 2017 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried unanimously.

C. Bills

Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows:

Common Cash	\$ 296,403.45
Public Works	\$ 244,010.02
Trust & Agency	\$ 7,724.36
 Total Checks	 \$ 547,137.83
 Credit Card Transactions (June 15 to June 28. 2017)	 \$ 12,157.90
 Total Purchases	 <u>\$ 560,295.73</u>
 ACH Payments	 <u>\$ 553,806.84</u>

Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried unanimously.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

D. Disposal of Studio Production Equipment

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the sale or donation of surplus production equipment. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried unanimously.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

11. HEARINGS (None)

12. ACTION ITEMS (None)13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Lake Lansing SAD Renewal

Director Perry summarized the Lake Lansing SAD Renewal as outlined in staff memorandum dated June 27, 2017.

Board and staff discussion:

- Process used to ascertain the assessment amount, proposed increase and voluntary contribution sources, and the renewal process is the same as used for the original special assessment
- Township initiated the first SAD for Lake Lansing and will do so for the renewal
- Composition of the Lake Lansing Watershed Advisory Committee and meeting attendance by homeowners, and awareness of residents regarding the proposed \$10,000 annual increase in assessment
- Rationale for the increase due to rising costs for water treatment, removal of vegetation and the addition of a boat cleaning station
- Two (2) public hearings and public notices sent by the Township regarding the hearing
- Caution with moving forward if the August 8th Police and Fire millage is not successful
- Request for history of Tier 1 and Tier 2 payments over the duration of the SAD

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at its July 18, 2017 Board meeting.

B. Auditing Services

Finance Director Mattison summarized the history of the Township's auditing services as outlined in staff memorandum dated June 29, 2017.

Board discussion:

- Preference to enter into a competitive bidding process as recommended by staff
- Current contract has expired

It was the consensus of the Board for staff to begin the competitive bidding process for the Township's auditing services and bring the results back to the Board for direction.

C. Vacant Property Ordinance

Director Kieselbach summarized the potential for a Township vacant property ordinance as outlined in staff memorandum dated June 28, 2017.

Board discussion:

- List contains ten (10) properties which have no code violations or delinquent property taxes and the remaining ten (10) properties either have code violations or are delinquent in property tax payments
- Negative impact of vacant homes in neighborhoods through tall grass, lack of snow removal, debris, etc.
- Current Township system is complaint driven
- Unpaid lawn mowings placed on property tax bills are an indicator of vacant homes, but have not been identified as such by the Township
- Belief that properties which have been identified as vacant are not being properly maintained, but not reported as a code violation

- Belief an ordinance similar to the East Lansing ordinance would provide the Township with tools to register vacant homes
- One-third of identified properties where the Township is mowing the lawns are bank owned properties and one-fifth of the identified properties are company owned
- Township has employed summer help to drive the Township looking for tall grass violations in residential areas, and the code enforcement officer addresses issues with commercial properties
- Belief the vast majority of mowing violations are not vacant homes and non-compliance is a civil infraction
- Meridian Township has several ordinances to address different types of blight (e.g., nuisance ordinance, property maintenance code, etc.)
- Suggestion for existing Township staff to maintain the registry and the time difficulty for staff to “track” property owners in some instances
- Suggestion that the proposed ordinance set up a system, which pays for the necessary code enforcement to identify vacant properties
- Belief the proposed ordinance is a “solution in search of a problem,” and the facts should drive the discussion
- Concern over compliance with the proposed ordinance, the difficulty in enforcing aesthetics, and the lack of fairness for owners of vacant homes who maintain their property
- Appreciation for the Township’s current effort in protecting the neighborhoods wherein vacant properties exist
- Belief an ordinance will enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the township

It was the consensus of the Board to have staff prepare a draft Township vacant property ordinance and bring it back to the Board for further discussion.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Ann Alchin, 5972 Cypress, Haslett, addressed failed development projects in downtown Okemos and related concerns with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, offered suggestions regarding the Celebrate Meridian event.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Deschaine apologized for missing this evening’s Election Commission Meeting prior to the Board meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

Clerk Dreyfus reminded citizens to vote in the August 8th election on the Police and Fire Millage proposal.

Treasurer Brixie announced property tax bills were mailed July 1, 2017 and electronic payment forms are available in the Treasurer’s office or at www.meridian.mi.us for those citizens interested in electronic payment. She reminded residents tax bills are due September 14th by 5:00 P.M.

Supervisor Styka requested Manager Walsh clarify what percentage of the proposed millage would go towards the pension liability. Manager Walsh reiterated the millage proposal has been, and will continue to be, described as more about pension than staffing and equipment, and is being requested to address issues which have escalated over the last 30 years.

Trustee Opsommer reminded citizens a community conversation will be held on Monday, July 17, 2017 beginning at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Room regarding the proposed Police and Fire Millage as well as other current topics (e.g. local roads, redevelopment of the downtown areas, etc.)

16. ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Brixie moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 8:33 P.M.

RONALD J. STYKA
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS, CMMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary