

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING – **APPROVED** -  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room  
TUESDAY, December 5, 2017, **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Director of Public Works and Engineering Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning Mark Kieselbach, Police Chief David Hall, Fire Chief Fred Cowper, Human Resources Director Joyce Marx, Economic Development Director Chris Buck,

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Okemos High School Boys State Tennis Champions

Coach Chris Silker introduced the 2017 State Championship team who ended their season undefeated 20-0. Coach Silker shared his appreciation for the community support.

B. Introduction of Interim Fire Chief Lori Schafer retired Township Battalion Chief. She stated excitement to working with the great staff of the Meridian Township Fire Department.

C. Introduction of New Police Officer- Lerico White, who attended Mott Community College and went to the Law Enforcement Regional Training Academy. Officer White shared his excitement to serve the Township residents.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Peter Holz, 2215 Burcham Rd; Support for railroad quiet zone, worked with the Federal Railroad Administration. Township as Prime Community, stand out among other communities. RR Quiet Zone adds to community and property values. Concerned that the preliminary report did not include the constant warning time devices and the costs associated with those.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Quarterly Treasurer's Report-Julie Brixie

- Treasurer Brixie provided the board with a report regarding delinquent personal property tax collection totals collected for tax years 2012-2016
- Total 2017 tax year collections, tax distributions, fixed maturity investment, and non-fixed investments.
- Winter tax bills went out on December 1, 2017
- New online system that residents can use to pay their taxes

Trustee Jackson reported:

- Attended LEAP with EDC Director Chris Buck, supporting and promoting economic development in the previous and coming year.

Trustee Opsommer reported:

- CATA board meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup> hired Interim CEO Brad Funkhouser as the permanent CEO of CATA. Opsommer believed that he was the most qualified candidate for the position.

Trustee Deschaine reported:

- EDC will be meeting December 7, 2017. Transportation Commission canceled their December meeting and won't meet again until January.

Treasurer Brixie reported:

- Attended Tri-County Planning Commission meeting, discussed issues including appointee representation and governmental unit definitions.

Trustee Sundland reported:

- Attended Planning Commission meeting last week, where form-based code was discussed.
- Attended the Intern Recognition Dinner on Dec 4<sup>th</sup> for HOM-TV interns.

Clerk Dreyfus reported:

- Post-election report regarding November election reimbursement process, and notification from Ingham County Clerk that Meridian would not be reimbursed for labor costs
- Clerk worked with Township Attorney, Township Manager, and other municipal clerks to share information and develop unified approach to full election cost reimbursement
- Subsequent notification from Ingham County Clerk of providing full reimbursement to local municipalities who only had Ingham County millage proposal on their ballots

Supervisor Styka reported:

- Christmas in the Historical Village, December 10, 2017, was a successful event. Fire Chief Cowper retiring after 20 years, celebration in his honor on December 20, 2017.
- CIA met November 29<sup>th</sup>, DDA met on December 4<sup>th</sup> with a presentation on the future of development in the downtown districts

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

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

A. Communications

**Trustee Opsommer 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 Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Minutes

**Trustee Opsommer moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the Study Session Meeting and the Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Bills

**Trustee Opsommer moved that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows:**

<b>Common Cash</b>	<b>\$ 326,629.66</b>
<b>Public Works</b>	<b>\$ 5,568.33</b>
<b>Trust &amp; Agency</b>	<b>\$ 60,488.31</b>
<b>Total Checks</b>	<b>\$ 392,686.30</b>
<b>Credit Card Transactions (Dec. 1 to Dec. 7, 2016)</b>	<b>\$ 5,308.49</b>
<b>Total Purchases</b>	<b><u>\$ 397,994.79</u></b>
<b>ACH Payments</b>	<b><u>\$ 902,981.06</u></b>

**Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

10. TOWN HALL MEETING

Supervisor Styka opened the Town Hall Meeting at 6:35 P.M.

No comments were offered at the Town Hall Meeting.

Supervisor Styka Closed the Town Hall Meeting at 6:36 P.M.

Board and staff discussion:

- A history of not promoting the Town Hall Meeting, a belief that Town Hall Meetings could become a free-for-all if it is highly publicized without having clear goals or topics
- History of public not attending, Town Hall Meetings are not connecting with the public
- Board member belief that if singular topics were promoted and publicized, it may bring more people to the Town Hall Meetings – topic example: Medical Marijuana Facilities in the Township

11. HEARINGS

- A. Sleepy Hollow SAD Public Hearing

Public Hearing opened at 6:37 P.M

Public Works Director Perry summarized the proposed Special Assessment District as outlined in a staff memorandum dated December 5, 2017.

- Public Comment

Tom Pinnavaia, 5901 East Sleepy Hollow Lane; Questions about the Sleepy Hollow SAD, strong supporter of the SAD project. He mentioned the evolution of costs associated with the project, a large range of costs, doesn't know the actual final costs. He would like feedback from Public Works regarding the actual costs vs estimated costs. He would like to see where the low estimates originated.

- Staff Comment

Director Perry stated that when the initial estimates were all on the lower scale, design modifications have been done, construction technique changes, laterals brought out to the manholes, using plastic water main instead of iron. Underestimated the road project as well, using crushed concrete or asphalt milling instead of gravel instead. Worked hard with the contractors to get the project costs down as much as possible. He will provide the bid documents to residents who would like to see where the estimates were low.

Public Hearing closed at 6:42 P.M

## 12. ACTION ITEMS

### A. Sleepy Hollow SAD Resolution #4

**Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the Sleepy Hollow Special Assessment District Resolution #4, approving the cost, confirming the special assessment roll, declaring a lien on the assessed parcels and directing the payment and collection of the special assessment. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.**

Board and staff discussion:

- Has the Township has received any letters objecting to the Special Assessment District?
- No formal objections, questions regarding reduced benefit on the sewer side of an assessment for a parcel in the south end of the project, because there may be additional costs in the future
- Importance of project, very expensive, needed to protect the health of the residents
- Water main available to some residents, thus assessments are only for the sewer portion
- Road bid increases and overall project bid increases, how bid estimates are conducted
- Savings with low bidder, differences between the first estimate and the new estimate
- No prepayment penalties, be aware of prepayments in order to not over-bond the project
- Residents can also make partial payments and avoid the 4% interest on what they pre-pay

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Railroad Quiet Zone

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to have Director Perry work with Abonmarche, the consultant for the Railroad Quiet Zone review and finalize the cost for the implementation of the limited option for the CSX line and for the CN line with the additions of the Z-gates at Haslett Road with finalized cost being included in the budget process. Seconded by Trustee Deschaine.**

Board and staff discussion:

- Railroad Quiet Zones improve the quality of life by eliminating train horns at intersections, technology ensures Township resident safety, can improve property values, a form of “placemaking” showing that the Township cares about business and residents
- Support for a larger, more comprehensive version of quiet zones but happy to move forward
- Positive impact on the northern part of the Township
- Clarification between the limited option and the comprehensive proposal, costs of upgrading the CSX line (Option 1) \$600,000, a limited Option 2 could be implemented for \$27,000
- Number of trains on each line daily, CN line runs more trains and are ready to go for upgrades besides the installation of the Z-gates
- Inquiry on need for traffic counts at crossings, RR compelled to install gates if traffic counts reach a certain threshold, example of Meridian and Hulett Roads
- Project Task Force could be used to research feasibility/need for Township-wide RR Quiet Zone

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, and Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

C. CATA Redi-Ride

**Trustee Deschaine moved to direct the Township Manager to negotiate a formal agreement with CATA for Redi-Ride Service, replacing the 2000 Letter of Agreement. The new agreement would include regular reporting, data collection, on-going communications with the Township Board and Transportation Commission, service standards, updated technology tools for riders, investigation of options for cross-border commerce centers, and pursuit of increased capacity and/or hours of service. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

Board and staff discussion:

- Redi-Ride discussed often at Transportation Commission (TC) meetings
- Concerns about Redi-Ride data not supplied regularly by CATA
- Regular reporting data collection, communication among public bodies, service standards, who is using Redi-Ride, when they are using it
- Redi-Ride borders – past, present, and future, cross-border shopping destinations
- Negotiating with CATA – roles of Township Manager, Board, Transportation Commission
- Transportation Commission can propose service boundaries options for the Board

**Trustee Opsommer moved to strike “investigation of options for cross-border commerce centers” from the motion. Seconded by Trustee Deschaine.**

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Opsommer

NAYS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

Motion failed 6-1.

**Treasurer Brixie moved to amend language in motion to “Implement service to cross-border commerce centers Costco and the Bath Meijer.” Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Brixie

NAYS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka,  
Clerk Dreyfus

Motion failed 6-1.

**Vote on the Main Motion:**

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka,  
Treasurer Brixie, and Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

D. 2018 Township Goals

**Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the 2018 Goals Action plan as developed by the Township Board and administrative team. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Set a Date for Annual Performance Review Township Manager

Board and staff discussion:

- Performance Review scheduled for December 5, 2017, is moved to December 12, 2017
- Manager Walsh stated that he waived the right in the contract to have his review done by November 1, 2017. Manager Walsh has requested under the Open Meetings Act that the Performance Review be in Closed Session.

**Trustee Jackson moved to set the date of December 12, 2017, for the purpose of conducting the 2017 performance review of Meridian Township Manager Frank L. Walsh in closed session. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka,  
Treasurer Brixie, and Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Appointment of Interim Fire Chief Lori Schafer

Board and staff discussion:

- Michigan Charter Townships Act requires that the Board appoint Fire Chief and Police Chief, which is why it was added to the agenda
- Unanimous decision on offering position to Lori Schafer
- Community support for Lori Schafer to take on this role, first female fire chief, very qualified pool of candidates
- Question regarding Interim Chief Schafer’s retirement status from Meridian Township and her current pension restricting her from seeking the full-time position
- MERS rules: a 60-90 day hiatus, work less than 1,000 hours in a year, cannot draw a MERS pension and come back and work in the same community
- Anyone currently employed at Meridian Township interested in the full-time position are on a level playing field moving forward

**Trustee Sundland moved to appoint Lori Schafer to the position of Interim Fire Chief with the effective and ending date to be determined by the Township Manager. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, and Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Vacant and Abandoned Land Ordinance

Director Kieselbach discussed the vacant and abandoned building ordinance. He stated that the Township Attorney reviewed the proposed ordinance and offered changes.

Board and staff discussion:

- Township Attorney recommendation regarding Definition section 14-200 and terms foreclosure, mortgage, and mortgagee; separating terms vacant and abandoned
- Fees for registration, renewals, and inspections or re-inspections
- Determining intent to return to property or maintain the building; no forwarding address, no utility connection, property damage – considered an abandoned building. Temporary absence was discussed and notice of such is not required
- Building access, need for keys, owner records & tax information, responsible party listed
- Board member belief vacant ordinance not needed, imposes unnecessary registration and expenses on township residents, few complaints justify need for ordinance
- Board member view that nuisance issues are covered in existing ordinances, issue seems to be obtaining contact information
- Board member views on buildings that are left vacant for longer than 6 months, protecting health, safety, and welfare, effect on property values, eliminating problems

**It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at the December 12, 2017 Board meeting.**

B. Lake Lansing Road Diet

Director Kieselbach discussed the proposed Lake Lansing Road Diet. The Meridian Township Transportation Commission held on a Public Hearing November 16, 2017 at the request of the Ingham County Road Department. Proposal reducing the road on Lake Lansing from Saginaw Hwy to Hagadorn from four lanes to a single westbound lane, a single eastbound lane, and a center turn lane. ICRD is looking at road resurfacing and at that time they would perform the road diet. This will result in extra pavement for non-motorized use on both sides of the road. Replacing signals at Park Lake Road and Hagadorn Road will be part of the project.

Board and staff discussion:

- Three people spoke in favor, and one opposed, at the Public Hearing
- Belief that there are not significant markings for bike lanes on other projects
- ICRD stated they will come back to the Township with a proposal for markings and signage
- Congestion reduction, elementary school benefit, complete street approach favors marked bike lanes
- Impact of Walnut Hills potential re-development on Lake Lansing Road traffic
- Costco traffic affecting Lake Lansing Road, Costco traffic should stay on the highway and not flood township streets
- Dir. Kieselbach: Walnut Hills and Costco should have little impact on Lake Lansing Rd traffic
- ICRD is looking to implement this road diet in 2019
- Director Perry stated pathway funds could be utilized for bike path signage, ICRD would do the work, and the township would sign a cost-share agreement
- “Share The Road” signs put up on Park Lake, Director discouraged them – can cause confusion to drivers and non-motorists, he suggested only to have designated bike paths with signage
- ICRD calls bike lanes “paved shoulders”

**It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at the December 12, 2017 Board meeting.**

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Supervisor mentioned that commenting during board member discussion is not normal procedure and that members of the public have an opportunity to comment during two sessions of public comment

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

16. ADJOURNMENT

**Treasurer Brixie moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.**

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 7:58 P.M.

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RONALD J. STYKA  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

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BRETT DREYFUS  
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Maggie Rodgers-Sanders, Secretary