



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
Communications Commission Regular Meeting **APPROVED** Minutes
Wednesday, December 18, 2024 | 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Commissioner (Vice Chair) Lisa Whiting Dobson; Commissioner Mike Nevells,
Commissioner Amol Pavangadkar
ABSENT: Chair Leslie Charles
STAFF: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
TOWNSHIP: Clerk Angela Demas
COUNSEL: None
COMCAST/AT&T: None

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Charles called the meeting to order at **6:00 pm**

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Pavangadkar moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**.
Seconded by Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT

Manager Diehl went over the 4th quarter report.

The Township Board selected their candidate for the next Township Manager, Timothy Dempsey.

The Communications Department would like to implement an internal communications policy as well as a crisis communications plan in 2025. Manager Diehl would also like to update the HOMTV Operating Policies due to outdated and confusing language.

Manager Diehl and Specialist Stohlin plan on holding social media training for the employees who have access to Meridian Township's social media accounts. Manager Diehl and Specialist Stohlin also plan on taking FEMA's public information officer training.

Manager Diehl went over the events that were marketed in the 4th quarter and stated that there will be four students for the spring 2025 semester.

7. **COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Communications Chair: None.

Township Board Liaison: Township Board voted to select Tim Dempsey as the next Township Manager. Clerk Demas stated the Board wants to include citizen outreach in their 2025 goals. She also noted that HOMTV and the Township Board will work together to ensure closed sessions are filmed once the Board comes out closed session. Commissioner Whiting Dobson asked what specific goals the Board wants in relation to communication, but Clerk Demas said they are still developing them.

Commissioners Report: Commissioner Nevells wants the PEG fees to be corrected. He also wants the Commission to look at the Communications Commission Policies and Procedures.

Commissioner Pavangadkar asked Manager Diehl how much is spent on broadcast equipment. Manager Diehl went through the approved 2025 budget for the Communications Department and explained what each line item is used for. Commissioner Pavangadkar also asked if HOMTV partners with the Okemos and Haslett School Districts. Manager Diehl explained that nothing is in place currently.

8. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. Set 2025 Meeting Schedule

At the end of the year, the Communications Commission must set their meeting schedule for the following year. The Communications Commission was presented with five meeting dates for the 2025 calendar year.

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE THE 2025 COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED.** Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Chair and Vice Chair Appointments

At the end of the year, the Communications Commission must also select a new chair and vice chair for the following year.

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE LISA WHITING DOBSON AS THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION CHAIR FOR THE 2025 CALENDAR YEAR.** Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE LESLIE CHARLES AS THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION VICE CHAIR FOR THE 2025 CALENDAR YEAR.** Seconded by Commissioner Pavangadkar. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. General Fund Allocation for Communications Commission Grants

Commissioner Whiting Dobson began the discussion by mentioning how COVID showed the lack of internet connectivity that some people have and how that fueled this discussion item and wanting to help find a solution for universal connectivity in Meridian Township. In the past, the Communications Commission discussed the possibility of issuing grants to those in need of service. She brought up the Community Resource Commission and how they have criteria and standards for determining the needs a resident has and how they can help them. She mentioned that the Commission could possibly adopt their criteria when it comes to deciding who gets internet assistance.

Commissioner Whiting Dobson would like to meet with Comcast, AT&T, and Metronet to see if they would be open to assisting with internet connectivity. She also brought up WOW and how they are in Williamston, but was curious if they could provide internet in Meridian Township.

Commissioner Nevells wants to address both the infrastructure cost it would take for someone to get connected to internet, as well as assistance with their bill if they need it. He suggested that the Township and cable companies could take care of the infrastructure cost, and the Commission would fill in the gaps and issue grants for the WiFi bill portion. He wants to be able to help anyone with connectivity, not just those who need help with their bill.

Commissioner Nevells suggested having a special meeting with Township stakeholders and the cable companies to present the idea and get the discussion started. It can be more of an information gathering meeting before the discussion goes further.

Commissioner Pavangadkar mentioned the Quello Center at MSU. Commissioner Nevells would like to add an agenda item to the January 2025 Communications Commission meeting where the Commission and staff discuss how a meeting can be set up with the proper stakeholders. Commissioner Whiting Dobson asked Commissioner Pavangadkar if the Quello Center would send a representative to our meeting. He said he would check on that.

Commissioner Nevells suggested that a special committee be put together to help with this because the Commission will not be able to accomplish it with only four meetings in a calendar year.

All commissioners asked Manager Diehl to add an agenda item to the January 2025 meeting where they can discuss next steps.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Compliments/Complaints

None.

A. Correspondences

None.

11. REPORTS

A. Video Service Provider(s)

None.

B. Programming

None.

C. Website & Social Media

None.

D. Promotions/Publications

Manager Diehl informed the Commission that they have already begun working on the Prime Meridian Magazine and laid out the timeline. The goal is to have it released at the beginning of February.

E. Finance

None.

F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni

None.

G. Broadband

None.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pavangadkar moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Whiting Dobson adjourned the meeting at 7:16 pm.