

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room  
TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Assistant Township Manager Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Police Chief Dave Hall, Deputy Police Chief Ken Plaga, Economic Development Director Chris Buck

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. Flood Response - Mary Hull, Ingham County Emergency Manager

Presented information on flooding in Ingham County, State of Emergency in county, no overtime for Sheriff's Dept, Road Dept allotted overtime. Flood victims should contact insurance agent and State of Michigan. Differences between 20, 30, 50 and 100 year floods, Public Works has floodplain maps for citizens to review, municipal reimbursement inquiry.

B. Meridian Township Police Department - Gun Safety

Deputy Police Chief Plaga presented information on gun safety in Meridian Township. Annual training conducted including Train the Trainer, goal is to keep violent offenders from getting to where they are trying to go, increase response times for first responders, work with schools on lockdown drills, emergency response plans, radio system for communication with Police. 2015 grant funding for new doors and locking system, Police have code keys, Williamstown Township Schools policies, inter-departmental cooperation and training.

Haslett Schools Superintendent Cook spoke about school safety, reviewing plans, community input, mental health crisis team, working with community members for increased awareness.

Okemos Schools Superintendent Alena Zachery-Ross mentioned the district response plan, ALICE training, research security holes where Okemos schools are vulnerable. Working together with Haslett schools, mental health assembly at Okemos High School 3/7/2018.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Dr. East Lansing; Stated her background and that people are “left out” due to political machine being about money and power, including minorities and people with disabilities, and they should run for office. Disappointed in Board discussion at previous meeting, opposed to seniors being charged a proposed higher rate to get them to use Spec-Tran. Ms. Rose mentioned the Board shouldn’t make decisions for services without involving those directly affected, adding the quote “nothing about us without us.”

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandalwood, Okemos; was offended by the Board Redi-Ride discussion, discussed history from 1999, Meridian 3.0 mils to CATA, and an additional millage to CATA for sprawling affluent community to connect to fixed route bus service. Spoke 3 years ago to Township Manager Walsh about Redi-Ride and how students were impeding on seniors and the disabled.

Karla Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing; Transportation Commissioner, voted for recommendation for extended service to make hours equal to the other Redi-Ride services in the system i.e. Holt, Mason. She suggested a half fare keeping with other CATA transit, similar to other bus systems across the state. Suggested a termination clause so that the Township is able to get out of the contract with CATA if needed. Encourages negotiating with schools about managing their students, having a late bus for extracurricular activities.

Mike Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing; voiced comments regarding a need for Redi-Ride restructuring, unsure if big increases in fare structure will work, with 37% increase in coverage of time, rates should not double or quadruple, and availability of grants. Thankful for the snow removal and pathway millage so he is able to walk up and down Lake Lansing Road. Walnut Hills property still has a lot of water, 280 houses are better than 400, especially with all the water on the site. Mr. Hudson discussed pathways and walkability to pharmacy, restaurant, bank, school; Carriage Hills shopping center has space available for new stores to walk to.

Steve Vagnozzi, 2144 Woodfield Rd, Okemos; Transportation Commissioner, goal of motion was increasing the ability to use Redi-Ride to get to and from employment in the Township, current hours do not allow people to get to work on time. The Transportation Commission wanted expanded service without the Township having to put in more money and came up with the \$2.50 fare, Redi-Ride is functionally equivalent to Spec-Tran. The current fare discount structure is not in-sync with the economic needs of the members of the community; half-fares are being given to those who don’t necessarily need the discount. Encouraged finding alternatives ways of helping those with a legitimate financial need to afford Redi-Ride, but sticking with the current structure with seniors and students does not accomplish that.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

## 6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Assistant Manager Perry Reported:

- Road closings on Jolly Road from Dobie to Meridian, other closures, encouraged alternate routes to the public.
- Question about BL 69 and Newton Road, concerns from bicyclists, implementation of complete streets, new park nearby, possible resolution in support of a pedestrian pathway that crosses the median; Assistant Manager stated that MDOT is open to the pathway, Transportation Commission is taking the issue up at their next meeting.
- Question about the cloverleaf at Jolly and Okemos Rds. during construction with unique turning restrictions, closures have not changes and Communications Department will be putting out additional closure information to public.

## 7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Deschaine reported:

- Economic Development Corporation (EDC) meeting held on March 1, 2018; City Limits expanding and wants an outdoor open space with beach volleyball and batting cages

- Economic Development Director Buck updated the EDC on the status of the application for Redevelopment Ready Community, which is under discussion

Clerk Dreyfus reported:

- He received CMMC (Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk) certification renewal for 3 year period
- It has been 3 months since rules on opting into the Medical Marijuana Facilities Licensing Act (MMFLA) were promulgated by the State of Michigan, Board promised discussion on MMFLA after rules were established by the State, on-going interest in the topic from constituents
- If the Township were to opt into the new State regulatory model for medical marijuana, there would be extra tax revenue for roads
- Called for the Board to stop delaying work on this issue, needs to be on the agenda and discussed starting at the next Board meeting

Treasurer Brixie reported:

- Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) has been contemplating a change in membership, Clinton County has requested additional seats, TCRPC sent the issue to the Bylaws Committee, she sits on that committee and there will be further dialogue on the issue
- Discussion was held regarding the search for a permanent director, interim director acting now

Trustee Opsommer reported:

- CATA Board of Directors met at Meridian Township Hall, rotation of meetings among local municipalities,
- Contract for emergency fleet reviewed and analyzed, implementation of plan in conjunction with maintenance staff, fleet is now in good working order
- CATA worked with Lansing on flood evacuations
- Ingham County Board of Commissioners requested a voting seat on the CATA board, currently 5 voting entities (member jurisdictions), various local municipalities have CATA millages levied
- Ingham County is arguing they should have 2 voting seats on CATA Board because of the millage levy and the financial benefit that the County brings to CATA, local public bodies have to vote to agree to this request
- Free fares on March 17<sup>th</sup> for St. Patrick’s Day from 4 p.m. to 3 a.m. (Route 4: Entertainment Express)

Supervisor Styka reported:

- DDA and CIA met and are working together for the development of the downtown areas
- Women’s history month, important to nation’s history, labor force, key roles in charitable and philanthropic activities
- Student artwork exhibited at the Township Hall, new artwork from Murphy Elementary
- Spring recycling event is scheduled for April 21

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as submitted. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

A. Communications

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

B. Minutes

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 20, 2018, as submitted. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

C. Bills

**Clerk Dreyfus moved that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows:**

<b>Common Cash</b>	<b>\$364,546.09</b>
<b>Public Works</b>	<b>\$6,221.21</b>
<b>Trust &amp; Agency</b>	<b>\$3,546,149.12</b>
<b>Total Checks</b>	<b>\$3,916,916.42</b>
<b>Credit Card Transactions February 15 to February 28, 2018</b>	<b>\$8,445.95</b>
<b>Total Purchases</b>	<b><u>\$3,925,362.37</u></b>
<b>ACH Payments</b>	<b><u>\$58,845.36</u></b>

**Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Board Discussion:

- Board member stated concerns about consulting contract with Former Fire Chief Fred Cowper for \$9,100 a month, was this previously approved under a consent agenda, and why the Township is paying an Interim Fire Chief and this high rate for a consultant
- Board member belief that it was a cost saving because the Interim Chief is only part-time and collecting a pension, she is working within the limits of what she is allowed and was part of the agreement negotiations, Former Fire Chief Cowper was working before retirement on reducing ISO rating and is continuing this work in consulting agreement
- The reduction of the ISO rating would, if achieved, represent savings for residents on their homeowner's insurance, which is partially based on ISO rating
- Board member does not believe that this is a cost savings and would like more information about the contract with the former Fire Chief and what work he is performing
- Board member question about the legality of donating funds to Meridian Mall for the Chinese New Year celebration, and if the donation is an EDC check being run through the Township
- The check is from the Parks Department budget, through Celebrate Meridian and through budget appropriation they have contributed to the Chinese New Year celebration, and donated staff in the past
- Meridian Mall has been better at getting funding, so the Township did not staff the event and gave the mall a \$1000 donation for the stage
- The EDC also donated \$1,000 for the event and have done so since the celebration's inception
- Total donations for the Chinese New Year in 2018 was \$2000
- Board member stated that it may not be legal to donate to Meridian Mall, a private entity, and asked this be run by the attorneys
- Board member mentioned that most Chinese students at New Year event had no idea they lived in Meridian Township and are temporary residents, donations to Chinese New Year seems questionable as to community need and impact
- Board member stated that this was voted on and approved and is a great stimulus, and is a diversity event, which is a top goal of the Township
- Assistant Manager stated that Township Manager Walsh will be asked to address these issues

D. Ratification of New Police Officer Appointments

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to ratify the appointments of Blaine Anderson and Austin Dietz to the position of Police Officer contingent upon successful completion of those items stipulated in the conditional offer of employment. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

11. HEARINGS

## A. 2017 Order to Maintain Sidewalk SAD #17

Supervisor Styka opened the public hearing at 7:26 P.M.

There were no public comments.

Supervisor Styka closed the public hearing at 7:27 P.M.

12. ACTION ITEMS

## A. Redi-Ride Service Hours Expansion

**Trustee Deschaine moved the following:**

**Based on the recommendation provided by the Transportation Commission, the Meridian Township Board recommends the Township enter into an agreement with CATA to expand Redi-Ride hours from 7:30 am to 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday. To pay for the additional service hours, we recommend using the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Funds (NFF) grants, and to institute a \$1.25 discounted fare for Medicare cardholders, seniors age 62 and older, and persons with disabilities, and a \$2.50 fare for regular passengers and students. Free Rides would remain unchanged.**

**We also request CATA give us feedback once the new schedule is operational and advise the Township of any beneficial adjustments to scheduled hours. We also request that CATA give us quarterly updates on the percentage of rides that are grant funded and the estimated new fare-box revenue generated.**

**We encourage CATA to consider subcontracting a portion of the service if it is necessary to avoid additional cost to the Township for the expanded service during the grant period. We recommend that any subcontractors used by CATA use ADA-compliant vehicles and the same procedures that CATA uses for subcontracting Spec-Tran service.**

**The agreement language should include a standard contract cancelation allowance.**

**Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

Board Discussion:

- Transportation Commission looked into expansion of hours and service areas, and how to cover the increase in costs for the extended hours
- Discussion on discounted rates, requirements under the Urbanized Area Formula Funding program, grant information, fare increases & discounts, cost analysis, what the township would have to fund to cover additional costs
- State law requires a 50% discounted rate for those who qualify
- Percentages of job access riders, seniors riders, people with disabilities riders, student riders and other riders: conservative projection – 60% of riders are grant-eligible, CATA predicts 74% ( similar to Delhi Township)
- With 74% grant-eligible riders, Meridian would need to fund \$22,000 shortfall in revenue
- Concerns about changing Redi-Ride motions and changes to funding, fare structures, grants, and the contract between CATA and the Township, and current definition of Redi-Ride
- Need to clarify misunderstandings in preparation for the 2019 Redi-Ride millage

- Receiving grants does not require the Township “do something” multiple years in the future, grants affect the fiscal year that they apply to, does not compel the Township to do something with millage after it expires
- Board members have heard or need to hear from residents who have been directly affected by Redi-Ride, students, residents living in subsidized housing, elderly and disabled people
- Board member reiterated that the Township is not locked into an agreement with CATA
- Board member stated that tabling the motion until the next Board meeting allows more input from the community, and residents can contact the Township Board with concerns

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to table Action item 12A. Redi-Ride Service Hours Expansion until the next Board meeting. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

**Treasurer Brixie moved to move Action Item 12A. to Discussion Items as item 13B. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

**B. Sleepy Hollow Special Assessment District (SAD) – Neighborhood Request to Terminate SAD**

Director Perry spoke regarding the Sleepy Hollow SAD and the neighborhoods request to terminate the SAD. On February 22, 2018 residents met and overwhelmingly supported the termination of the SAD. The costs and connection fees became a financial burden on neighborhood residents.

**Trustee Deschaine moved to rescind Resolution No. 4 adopted on December 5, 2017, and to terminate the Sleepy Hollow Special Assessment District and project confirmed thereby and to authorize the refund of any special assessment payments received. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

**C. Corridor Improvement Authority Appointments**

**Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the appointment of Jeffrey Ross to the Meridian Township Corridor Improvement Authority for a 4-year term ending 2/1/2022, and moved to approve the appointment of Eric Foster to the Meridian Township Corridor Improvement Authority for a 4-year term ending 2/1/2021.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

D. Economic Development Corporation Appointment

**Trustee Deschaine moved to approve the EDC recommendation of Brenda Chapman to the Economic Development Corporation for a 6-year term that expires on December 31, 2024. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

E. Waiver of Permit Fees

**Treasurer Brixie moved to authorize the Building Division to waive the fees for building, mechanical, electrical and plumbing permits for those houses that have had substantial flood damage during the most recent flooding event. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.**

Board Discussion:

- East Lansing also handles the Townships mechanical, electrical and plumbing permits and they agreed to waive those fees
- Permit fees will be waived for damage only related to the flooding, it will cover the permit costs, however residents still need to pull permits for the work being done
- Observation that fewer homes damaged now as there was with the 1975 flooding
- Residents should look into areas flooded and determine whether flood insurance is needed
- Board member stated this was only a 10-year flood and could have been much worse
- No numbers yet on specific number of homes affected by flood

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2017 Order to Maintain Sidewalk SAD #17-Public Hearing

Director Perry stated that as part of the Public Hearing process the item is placed under Board Discussion as well to give the Board a chance to ask questions regarding the program or address any issues.

**Consensus of the Board to place this item on the agenda for action at the next Board meeting.**

## B. Redi-Ride Service Hours Expansion

## Board Discussion:

- Board members discussed questions about the Redi-Ride Service issues, costs, grants, fare increases, funding out of general fund instead of grants, taxes generated for millages
- Supplementation of the fixed-route service, route frequency, transfer options
- Spec-Tran service comparison, subcontract through Dean Transportation, contract issues involving drivers, wages, benefits, costs of service, operations and logistics
- Regular Redi-Ride fare is currently \$1.25, discounted fare is \$0.60 cents for children under 42," senior citizens and people with disabilities; personal assistants ride for free, Medicare and disability cards are accepted, most drivers know the riders
- Discussion on Redi-Ride costs, discounts, comparisons with other communities, ridership profiles, CATA costs, subsidies and the high cost per rider, 18 years of bus service with no fare increase, Meridian Cares assistance, Spec-Tran comparisons, implications of accepting grants, how to subsidize operations, CATA's role in fare increases or reductions, expiration of Redi-Ride millage in 2019, CATA official responses dependent upon Township Board recommendations expressed in motions and resolutions

**Consensus of the Board to place this item on the agenda for action at the next Board meeting.**14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Dr. East Lansing; stated that the Board has "false information." Ann Arbor has ADA (compliant) paratransit and does not charge anything for people with disabilities and for seniors over 62. Ann Arbor has bus service on almost all roads in and outside of Ann Arbor. Ms. Rose is not opposed to expanding service or charging \$1.25 but how will it solve afternoon Redi-Ride capacity problems. Concerned about the hourly operating cost of \$55 an hour and that 12% of the Meridian Township population, around 4000 people, live under the poverty level. There are USDOT, ADA and paratransit regulations, while people pay a full \$2.50 on Spec-Tran. Regular paratransit like Redi-Ride and Ann Arbors night rides and holiday rides are half-fare.

Karla Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing; Meridian Cares only can provide assistance with fare once or twice a year. Stated a contract with CATA is the right move, Township could apply for grants without CATA. One Redi-Ride concern is that in a four hour period, if there are rides available (due to last-minute cancellation) you can't get them unless you call four hours in advance, meaning if a rider calls two hours before instead of four they still cannot get that ride even if there is an opening, so drivers are sitting idle when rides are canceled. Cannot schedule on Sunday for a Monday ride. Encouraged the Board to have the CATA staff come in for presentations.

Mike Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing; Mr. Hudson calculated that if there is a 37% increase in service and the Township doubles the fare, that's something he doesn't understand. Current service is taking \$300,000 from the Township and CATA puts up over \$100,000. Can the Township get a better match from CATA, and can it use those resources to reduce the pain points of Redi-Ride? Uber and Lyft are great but can be expensive; but you can get them when you need them and rate drivers. Can Township use these grants to empower CATA to be better and be a leader, and brand this as a new "almost Uber service," put some tech in and develop it right here.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandalwood, Okemos; struggling with funding and with doubling the cost to the rider who can least afford it. Need to look at the hourly rate of \$55 for the Redi-Ride service, 2.5 passengers per hour. It is actually \$66 an hour with equipment costs, divide \$66 per hour by 2.5 passengers with an average ride of 1.5 miles, costs \$26 dollars a ride. Who would pay these rates, when the Township is struggling to fund the service? Should use a subcontractor, like the Okemos School District, who approached the Transportation Commission and offered to do the service for a

fraction of the cost of CATA. Mr. Norkin stated that when it was voted on two weeks later, the Manager of Transportation voted against his own motion, and politics killed a solid proposal offered by Okemos Schools Transportation. This service carries passengers at \$5 a person, because there are school buses, dispatchers, a garage, and a fleet, and it works efficiently. This was a creative way to take care of 40% of the riders. Do not put the burden on those who can least afford it, the Township is not doing due diligence in the procurement of this service.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

16. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 8:56 P.M.

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RONALD J. STYKA  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

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BRETT DREYFUS,  
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Maggie Rodgers-Sanders, Secretary