



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864
Administrative Conference Room
Wednesday, October 2, 2019 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Chair, Walter Benenson; Commissioner, Leslie Charles; Commissioner, Brian Seipel and Alternate Commissioner, Riti Adhi
ABSENT: Vice-Chair, Tunga Kiyak; Commissioner, Mike Nevells and Alternate Commissioner, Kevin Thatcher
STAFF: Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director and Brandie Yates, Executive Producer
TOWNSHIP: Kathy Sundland, Meridian Township Board Trustee
COUNSEL: N/A
COMCAST: John Gardner, Director of External Affairs – Heartland Region

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Charles moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**. Seconded by Chair Benenson

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner SEIPEL moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2019 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Charles.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Discussion about the restructuring of the Communications Department and Director receiving her Board approved severance packet. Director is working with staff on training and wrapping up open items. Commissioners are very concerned with the amount of staff, funding for the Communications Department and the workload for the remaining staff.

The Commission discussed writing a resolution or letter showing concern for the reorganization of the Communications Department for 2020 and adding to the agenda under New Business.

The Director announced that the Township Board approved three positions for the Communications Department and the elimination of the Director position and the Administrative Assistant position.

7. TOWNSHIP BOARD LIAISON'S REPORT

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Showed concern that the reorganization was not discussed with the Communications Commission prior to presenting to the Township Board.

Budget approved for the Township. The HVAC system will be replaced and is in the approved budget. \$3.5 million, one-time allocations in this budget. Franchise fees are estimated at around \$600,000 for 2020, which used to be around \$900,000. All franchise fees and PEG fees will go into the general fund. A new IT Assistant Manager was hired.

9A. HOMTV OPERATING POLICIES

Recommended changes notated with red edits on the document. Discussed putting together a subcommittee of Commissioners to discuss changes further and make recommendations for the next Commission meeting scheduled for December 4, 2019. The policies are about HOMTV programming and operations, but should reflect changing in staff.

There was discussion about continuing the Commission for Communications if there is not a department moving forward. Discussion continued about the purpose of a Communications Commission and how the Commission oversees the HOMTV operations, regulations, cable compliance and franchise agreement, etc.

9B. CHANGES TO CABLE TELEVISION SECTION OF TOWNSHIP CODE OF ORDINANCES

Township Board approved amending the section.

The Commission discussed putting together a subcommittee of Commissioners to discuss any additional changes and make recommendations for the next Commission meeting scheduled for December 4, 2019. Many items in the ordinance are out of date and need to be updated to match state and federal law.

9C. CAMTV PEG ACCESS CHANNEL

Is it worth keeping CAMTV if funding is reduced and Comcast is able to start charging for the channel? Would the Commission recommend keeping the channel? Communications Department provided the history of the channel and the content that is added to the channel on a regular basis as well as the subscribers.

The Commission asked about the rules of adding content to the channel.

10A. COMPLIMENTS/COMPLAINTS

11A. VIDEO SERVICE PROVIDER

Updates provided by Comcast: iphone 11 is now available through Xfinity. Streaming App – used to be able to schedule recording on your phone, while you are away from how and now it is back.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Charles moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Seipel.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously
Chair Benenson adjourned the meeting at 7:27 pm.