

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD SPECIAL MEETING – **APPROVED AS AMENDED**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2014 **10:00 A.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor LeGoff, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra (10:10 AM), Wilson
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Director of Public Works and Engineering Ray Severy, Police Chief David Hall, Fire Chief Fred Cowper, Assessor David Lee, Director of Information and Technology Stephen Gebes, Director of Parks and Recreation LuAnn Maisner, Human Resources Director Joyce Marx, Director of Finance Gretchen Gomolka, Communications Director Deborah Guthrie

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor LeGoff called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.

2. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, spoke to the need for return of “ransom” money relative to the Township’s forfeiture proceedings if the individual is not convicted of any wrongdoing. He suggested reviewing established Township goals and objectives on a quarterly basis. Mr. Bowlby offered a graph on the overhead projector relative to the Township’s sewer system cleaning program, stating the Township should fulfill its five year turnaround. He spoke in support of adopting solar ready ordinances.

Doris Schwartz, 2209 Kent Street, Okemos, addressed clarity and consistency in the goals, noting they all need to start with a verb. She requested the Township define these verbs (e.g., maintain, implement, use, etc.) Ms. Schwartz suggested prioritizing the goals, with the most important goal listed first.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

At the request of the Supervisor, a roll of the Board and staff was called.

3. TOWNSHIP BOARD GOAL SETTING FOR 2015

Township Manager Walsh explained the goal setting process utilized, beginning with the End Statements from the Board’s Policy Governance Manual. He noted once the goals are adopted in their entirety, it will take four (4) votes to remove an item from the list. Manager Walsh explained that Goal 8 (communicating with residents) and Goal 9 (building strong neighborhoods) were added because these two issues were discussed throughout the Policy Governance Manual. He stated the proposed document provides Township residents with a blueprint of anticipated accomplishments which will service the community.

Clerk Dreyfus questioned the approach used to put forward suggested goals, stating it is a deviation from historical precedence. He noted the previous process was a multi-stage process used as an alternative to a Township Board retreat. He questioned the previous comment regarding the need to have four (4) Board votes to remove an item from the proposed plan as it is not official Board protocol.

Trustee Veenstra indicated the proposed suggestions should be adopted by the Board “goal by goal”.

Trustee Wilson believed the Board Policy Manual and the draft goals and objectives are two separate documents. She stated the proposed process is a good way to commence adopting goals and objectives, recalling that the Board had not undertaken this type of input from department directors in 2013.

Trustee Scales moved to adopt the process recommended by the Township Manager, stating the Board will work from this document, prioritize the items in this document and it will take a majority vote to remove an item from this document. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board and staff discussion:

- Board member preference to hear from the bottom up, not push items from the top down
- Board need for a process to achieve goals and objectives which are the most beneficial
- Document before the Board provides a foundation from which Board members can work
- Board members have the ability to place items on the list, take items off the list, or modify the items on the list with a majority vote
- Board member appreciation for the process created by staff
- Goal setting document ties in with the Board's End Goals and supports the guiding document of Policy Governance
- Staff recommendations contained in the document delineates each department's goals for which it will be accountable
- Preference to adopt each objective on an individual basis in lieu of adopting the entire document and making motions to delete certain parts
- Opposition to a "blanket" adoption
- Objection to prioritization of the objectives
- Board member belief the Board must be the initiating body
- Support for the interim procedure of working from the proposed document
- Proposed process for goal setting has been used by a number of communities

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-2 (Trustee Veenstra, Clerk Dreyfus)

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Four meetings have been set for the first phase of the process, the 140 objectives
- Second phase of the process is the 2015 Capital Project Fund
- Third phase will be initiatives by the Board
- Draft of the goals and objectives are not in priority order
- Board member preference to have the goals be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, results oriented, and time specific)
- Making the goals time specific will allow staff the ability to prioritize
- If objectives are not accomplished year after year, they are not being correctly measured
- Staff suggestion to take each numbered goal in its entirety

Trustee Veenstra moved to adopt Goal 1, Objective a.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Trustee Veenstra moved to adopt Goal 1: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance the environment, Objectives a through l. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Preference for Goal 1, objective d to provide for a soccer park at Wardcliff School
- Any additions should be brought up during Phase 3, Board Initiatives
- Possibility of a green roof for Goal 1, Objective e: Build a new green Central Fire Station
- Township is still in the planning phase of the new central fire station
- Staff is looking at one of the "levels" of green, subject to financial constraints
- Exorbitant cost to have the new central fire station certified
- Board member interpretation that "building green" means built as energy efficient as feasible and consideration be given to innovative items (e.g., solar panels, wind turbine, green roof)
- Cost needs to be determined to make the new central fire station "green"

- Process of adopting the use of best planning practices
- Planning staff uses best planning practices in its review of projects
- Number of ordinances already contain language which incorporates best planning practices (e.g., amenities in the mixed use planned unit development)
- Board member request for staff to look at ways to strengthen the use of best planning practices
- Board member request for identification of any new objectives listed
- Objective 1 k. needs to expand recycling into apartment complexes
- Board member request for an annual report from Granger on the percentage of its customers who use the recycling option
- Staff is already working on bringing recycling to apartment complexes

Trustee Veenstra moved to amend Goal 1, Objective k. by adding: Work to enhance recycling opportunities in apartment complexes. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Veenstra moved to amend Goal 1, Objective a. after “ordinance” by adding “and adopt a tree protection ordinance.” Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Soccer fields at Wardcliff to be added during Phase 3: Board Initiatives
- How are the results shown of what the Township accomplishes
- How success will be measured
- The approved document will be reviewed annually to determine accomplishments
- Board member belief all objectives listed in Goal 1 of the proposed document are a continuation of existing policies
- Goal 1, Objective b: Staff must update ordinances to protect natural features for consistency with state amendments/updates and Federal Emergency Management Agency updates

VOICE VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Dreyfus moved to adopt Goal 2: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance public safety, Objectives a through r. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Supervisor LeGoff moved to amend Goal 2, Objective b. by deleting “for subscribers” after “stories.” Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Trustee Veenstra).

Board and staff discussion:

- Goal 2, Objective d.: Grand River Corridor Access Management Ordinance was recommended by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to regulate curb cuts, intersection locations along the corridor, etc.
- Importance to retaining Goal 2, Objective d because of the sustainability study performed by Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and the upgrades being proposed
- Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) grant is a multi-agency grant and Meridian Township is the facilitator for the grant which allows additional enforcement of drunk driving, drugged driving and seat belt violations

Treasurer Brixie moved to add Objective s.: Implement a medical marihuana ordinance. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Continued Board discussion:

- Preference for initiatives to be added at the end during Phase 3 of the process

Treasurer Brixie withdrew her motion.

VOICE VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Dreyfus moved to adopt Goal 3: Meridian Township shall provide an unparalleled parks system, Objectives a through q. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Board and staff discussion:

- Dog park in Legg Park has been budgeted by Parks & Recreation, as well as Objectives b. through o.
- Park Commission has its own authority and it is appropriate to incorporate its goals into the overall goals of the Township
- Dog park in Legg Park was in the campaign material for the park millage increase
- Objectives p. (park and trail app for smart phones) and q. (Water Trail Access Program) are in the planning process
- Dog park in Legg Park has been a controversial issue
- Questionable Board authority in the decision of Legg Park dog park as it is under the purview of the Park Commission

The maker moved to remove Goal 3 (b): Legg Park-parking area, dog park and stewardship. Supported by Trustee Scales.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Opposition to removing the entire goal as there goals listed which improve other parks
- Major opponents to the dog park in Legg Park have moved from the area
- Board member belief the Township Board does not have any control over placement of a dog park in Legg Park whether or not it is included as a Board objective as it is the decision of a different elected body

The maker offered the following amendment to his previous motion:

- **Amend Goal 3, Objective b. by deleting “dog park”**

The amendment was accepted by the seconder.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Board member belief the Township Board has cojurisdiction with the Park Commission over location of a dog park in Meridian Township as it is the body which appropriates the money for the dog park

VOICE VOTE: Motion failed 3-4. (Trustees Styka, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie)

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Cost of an 18 hole disc golf course
- Parks and Recreation Department working with the Lansing Area Renegades, who volunteered support for the design and construction of the disc golf course
- Disc golf course as an important addition to the Township’s park system
- Staff belief the entire disc golf course can be built for approximately \$12,000
- Recent information that Lake Lansing North is considering constructing an 18 hole course; the Township may partner with Ingham County in this endeavor
- North Meridian Road Park and Central Park have been considered as a location of the proposed 18 hole disc golf course
- Phase I development of Towner Road Park is in the 2015 budget at \$280,000

VOICE VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: Motion carried 6-1 (Trustee Veenstra).

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt Goal 4: Meridian Township shall provide exemplary public services and facilities, Objectives a through y. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

Board and staff discussion:

- Board member support for Goal 4, Objective y.: the pursuit of Ingham County Trail Millage funding to implement the Lake Lansing to River Trail connector pathway
- Goal 4, Objective i.: Goal of the Township to use the health impact assessment (HIA) guide and the consideration of adopting a minimum score associated with the assessment tool
- Meridian Township was the first entity in Ingham County to use the HIA and has continued its use since 2004
- Staff uses the HIA as a tool within the review process when it speaks with developers
- HIA guide is on line for use by developers
- Difficulty in assigning a score when there are many data layers used in the assessment

It was the consensus of the Board to amend Goal 4, Objective a. by inserting “of taxable properties within Meridian Township”

- Goal 4, Objective e.: Revise the sign and parking regulations as a series of interviews with builders and developers conducted by the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) showed a desire for a comprehensive review of the Township’s existing sign and parking regulations
- Inquiry if Township properties will be assessed and the location of that objective in the proposed document
- Maintenance of township facilities is proper procedure for any local government
- Increased maintenance of Township facilities over the last year and many more such items listed in the 2015 Capital Project Fund
- Board member desire to add fill in of more pathway gaps
- Goal 4, Objective m. is to update the graphic on the exterior of the Township’s patrol cars
- Goal 4, Objective n.: Surveillance cameras are currently in the lobby of the public safety building, the booking area, the sally port, and ones which point out to the back of the public safety building
- Goal 4, Objective n.: Consideration of placing cameras in the concourse between the Municipal Building and the Public Safety Building and other areas to improve security in Township facilities

VOICE VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt Goal 5: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance our economic prosperity, Objectives a. through u. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Board discussion:

- Goal 5, Objective i.: Streetscape can be landscaping, new sidewalks or benches

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Trustee Veenstra).

Trustee Wilson moved to adopt Goal 6: Meridian Township shall promote and enhance diversity across the Township, Objectives a through l. Seconded by Milton Scales.

Board discussion:

- Goal 6, Objective j.: Preference to work will all cultures in the community to host cultural events, not just Chinese New Year and Heritage Festival events
- Goal 6, Objective h.: Township should be seeking diversity in promoting as well as hiring
- New Diversity in Inclusion Plan by Eaton County

It was the consensus of the Board to add “and promoting” after “hiring” in Goal 6, Objective h.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Definition of Language First Program (program which uses a “dial in” service to access a translator to address a language barrier in police interaction with individuals from other countries) should be included in Goal 6, Objective 1.

Without objection, a definition of the Language First Program will be added to Goal 6, Objective 1.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Goal 6, Objective e.: Board member inquiry if staff is looking at the feasibility of the provision in Tri-County Regional Planning Commission’s Housing Study which calls for municipalities to have 20% of housing developments be affordable

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Trustee Veenstra).

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt Goal 7: Meridian Township shall provide outstanding recreational and cultural programs, Objectives a. through j. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board discussion:

- Farmers’ Market is a victim of its own success
- Farmers’ Market is a placemaking activity and lacks sufficient parking
- Goal 7, Objective i: Board member request for cost estimates relative to relocation of the Farmers’ Market

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Wilson moved to adopt Goal 8: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance constituent communications, Objectives a. through r. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board discussion:

- Goal 8, Objective d.: Video imager is also called an overhead projector
- Goal 8, Objective o.: Replacement of Mobile software
- Goal 8, Objective o: Mobile Software is proprietary and used by the Ingham County Dispatch Center, of which Meridian Township is a participant
- Goal 8, Objective r.: Renaming select land preserves: For preserves that have not been named by donation, the Land Preservation Advisory Board is identifying a procedure to give the land preserves a name with a sense of place

Clerk Dreyfus moved to amend Goal 8, Objective h. after “website” by deleting “for 2016 proposal to the Township Board. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

VOICE VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Scales moved to adopt Goal 9: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance neighborhoods and eliminate blight, Objectives a through l. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board and staff discussion:

- Goal 9, Objective a.: Distributed Antenna System (DAS) poles are being placed in the rights-of-way without ordinances to regulate their placement
- Lack of regulation will have a snowball effect for roadside poles as there could be many add-ons

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Trustee Veenstra).

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- In addition to items approved in the 2015 Budget, there is approximately \$400,000 in the fund balance to allocate toward projects
- First six items check marked in the Capital Project Fund list have been recommended by staff at a cost of \$335,000
- \$65,000 has not been earmarked and can still be allocated
- Consideration of a one-time per capita Meridian Team Merit Pay (\$400 per employee) at a cost of \$60,000
- \$1,100 provided annually by the Township towards employees' Health Savings Account has been reduced to \$300-\$400
- Many employees do not take the Township's insurance
- Possibility of placing money in HSA accounts for those employees who take insurance and a lump sum for those employees who do not take insurance would be an administrative burden for staff

[Supervisor LeGoff recessed the meeting at 12:22 P.M.]

[Supervisor LeGoff reconvened the meeting at 1:01 P.M.]

2015 Capital Project Fund

Board and staff discussion:

- Appreciation for funding recommendations to renovate Township buildings
- During the recession and property value decline, many employees took on additional duties from eliminated positions while agreeing to a wage freeze for multiple years
- Taking inflation into consideration, employee wages have not kept pace with inflation
- Appropriation of projected capital fund expenditures would allow a projected general fund balance of \$5,775,478
- Board member support for all staff recommended capital project fund expenditures
- Replacing pole lights at the Municipal Complex as the poles are rusting out at the bottom
- Township will use LED lights for the poles
- Cost of \$60,000 for the Township website overhaul and branding seems high
- Website is the entry point for visitors looking at Meridian Township
- Need for searchability of the website
- Cost of website overhaul could be recouped in one economic development return

Trustee Veenstra moved to improve the Township website at a cost of \$15,000.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Staff request to keep the website overhaul at \$60,000 to allow the overhaul to be done correctly and provide flexibility in bringing the information back to the Board
- Need for a "better" entrance sign into Meridian Township from the east
- Condition of the pavement for the repaving projects not recommended for 2015 to ascertain if these projects can wait until later
- New workstations at a cost of \$4,400 are for potential interns
- Support for inclusion of the Meridian Team Merit Pay
- Website redesign and branding should occur at the same time
- Board member preference to launch the web redesign and branding simultaneously with the redesign of the police cars
- Need to research all the affected elements related to branding (e.g., Township seal, entrance signs into the Township, park signs, police and fire uniform patches, etc.)
- Inquiry if a portion of the resources can be set aside this year and then again in the next budget for the website and branding
- Job of the management team is to carry out the directives of the Board

Treasurer Brixie moved to add Meridian Team Merit pay to the funded list. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Dreyfus moved the overhaul of the Township website and branding up to an amount of \$60,000. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

Board and staff discussion:

- Need to meet with an expert on web design to determine the process first
- Board member belief the branding needs to come before the website redesign as the website is the conduit to convey the brand
- Initial phase of website needs assessment is independent of the brand
- Branding and website redevelopment are separate items which can run simultaneously as there is website content development unrelated to the branding
- Branding of the website comes later once the branding concepts are determined
- Funding of the web redesign would place the total figure over the \$400,000 of targeted fund balance expenditures
- Board member belief there are ample funds in the general fund balance to expend up to \$60,000 for website redesign and branding
- Number of pressing issues: legacy costs, pension costs, etc. which must be dealt with in the “big picture”
- Approximately \$250,000 from the fund balance must be considered if prevailing wage for the new central fire station is pursued
- Board member assumption that local units of government pay prevailing wage, since the state, universities and school districts must do so
- Concern with savings for savings sake v. investing in Meridian Township
- Board member preference for payment of prevailing wages for the new central fire station project
- Township Board has the authority to spend more than the recommended \$400,000 in expenses
- Preference for each Board member to bring forth their projects and then discuss which ones will be funded
- Some funds should be set aside for emergencies (e.g, ice storm cost)
- Citizen survey for the Master Plan has not been included in the list

Clerk Dreyfus called the question. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

VOICE VOTE: Motion failed 2-5 (Trustees Scales, Styka, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie, Supervisor LeGoff).

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Citizen survey was not specifically included in the money appropriated to the Planning Commission
- Planning Commission has not specifically decided upon the questions to be asked in the citizen survey
- Fiscal year 2015 audit requirement to report pension liabilities
- Board member preference to vet all projects prior to acting on any item

Trustee Scales moved to table the motion on the floor. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 4-3 (Trustees Styka, Veenstra, Clerk Dreyfus).

Clerk Dreyfus moved to rescind the Meridian Team Merit Pay distribution because of the rationale stated to deny the website revision.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Concern the rationale previously given that the entire budget needs to be reviewed or analyzed before voting on individual budget items was not followed with regard to the merit pay issue and is being selectively applied

- If prevailing wage for the new central fire station is a top Board priority, it needs to be acted upon as the Township is 7-10 days away from finishing the fire station process and it is imperative for the costs to be determined

Trustee Scales moved to budget \$250,000 for prevailing wage for the fire station. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

[Clerk Dreyfus left the room at 1:58 P.M.]

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Trustee Veenstra moved to not discuss any more capital projects until the final cost of the fire station is determined. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Township Board Initiatives

Trustee Scales moved to investigate purchasing the five (5) acres to the east of Wardcliff School which borders Park Lake Road for use as a soccer field. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- No knowledge the Okemos School District is interested in selling the property
- Idea may be premature

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Trustee Styka moved to adopt an ordinance prohibiting or regulating, as the law allows, fracking within the Township. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Board discussion:

- Possible police involvement if fracking cannot be prohibited
- Fracking may occur primarily within the undeveloped eastern portion of the Township

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Trustee Styka moved to develop plans for making Meridian a smart community with municipal fiber, broadband and public Wi-Fi. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Trustee Scales moved to utilize additional recruiting outlets and resources such as on-line job boards, advertisements and professional organizations to attract qualified minorities to apply for job openings. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Trustee Scales moved to provide professional training and development to staff. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

Board discussion:

- Public needs to be shown the Township Board stands by providing professional training and development to staff
- Staff will make attorney time available for Planning Commission training

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Trustee Scales moved to inspect township owned properties annually to ensure appropriate maintenance. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Treasurer Brixie moved to place implement quarterly department reporting under Goal 4. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Board and staff discussion:

- Weekly reports, Policy Governance Reports, semi-annual reports, commencement of goal setting reports, etc. are currently written
- Information would be more valuable if some of the reports are merged
- Board members always have the option to request information on an issue
- Board member belief the monthly reports are a compilation of existing data and are not time consuming to produce

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-1 (Trustee Veenstra).

Treasurer Brixie moved to investigate the pension liability funding plan. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Board discussion:

- Sustainability of the benefit packages
- Possibility of changing the pension plans

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

[Clerk Dreyfus reentered the room at 2:19 PM.]

Treasurer Brixie moved to conduct the citizen survey through ICMA with the same process or method as was used in 2012.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Clerk Dreyfus).

Trustee Wilson moved to investigate adoption of a medical marihuana ordinance. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board discussion:

- Board member preference to wait until passage of pending legislation at the state level
- One component of the state legislation under consideration is the option for local municipalities to ban medical marihuana
- Proposed motion is a way to have the ability to regulate certain aspects of it within the Township
- Medical marihuana was legalized by Michigan voters in 2008
- Need to respect the will of the people by not placing additional restrictions on medical marihuana
- Subcommittee put forth its recommendation which was approved by the Board and referred to the Planning Commission

Trustee Wilson restated her motion as follows:

- **Moved to monitor legislative actions relative to medical marihuana and prepare to act accordingly with local ordinances.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Wilson moved to investigate reaching out and expanding the Celebrate Downtown Okemos event to include other areas of the Township, including Haslett and East Lansing. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board and staff discussion:

- Events by various organizations (e.g., car show) could be held on the same weekend

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Veenstra moved to investigate providing a leaf pickup program in Meridian Township. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board discussion:

- Board member belief all surrounding municipalities have a leaf pickup program
- Investigation will include potential cost of the program

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-2 (Trustee Wilson, Treasurer Brixie).

Trustee Veenstra moved to fill in pathway gaps. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Supervisor LeGoff).

Trustee Veenstra moved to investigate providing ambulance service to the north part of Alaiedon Township between Jolly Road and Sandhill in the same area where fire service is provided.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Trustee Veenstra moved to investigate liberalizing Township ordinances regarding rebuilding after damage to non-conforming properties.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Clerk Dreyfus moved to review and update open space requirements. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board discussion:

- Communities across Michigan have a wide range of requirements for open space dependent upon the type of project, type of development, etc.
- Planning Department to review open space requirements of other municipalities

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Supervisor LeGoff).

Clerk Dreyfus moved to reduce penalties for small amounts of marihuana use and possession in Meridian Township. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board and staff discussion:

- Meridian Township must operate under state law
- Need to create ordinance language which allows Township police enforcement as the Township cannot reduce penalties of a state law under which the Township police enforces
- Need for creating an ordinance for violation of use of marihuana, making it a civil infraction with a penalty structure
- Board member belief decriminalizing marihuana is “right” for Meridian Township
- Number of Michigan court decisions which stated it is lawful for municipalities to adopt a local ordinance which created either higher or lower penalties than contained in state law
- Several municipalities passed ordinances on November 6th which lowered penalties for marihuana

Clerk Dreyfus restated his motion as follows:

Clerk Dreyfus moved to explore revision and/or modification of Township ordinances for the purpose of reducing penalties for possession or use of small amounts of marihuana. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Non-profit bi-partisan organizations have looked at approaches to dealing with drug addiction, drug problems and issues of criminalization and support the rational decriminalization of marihuana use
- Exploration of the issue will allow for citizen input in defining a new ordinance

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-2 (Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie).

Clerk Dreyfus moved to amend the forfeiture and/or seizure procedures in Meridian Township regarding settlement practices if the defendant is found innocent. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Need for a mechanism to return money paid up front by a defendant to have access to their asset in the event they are found innocent
- Board member example of a scenario where a technical error occurs during the process, the judge determines the defendant is not guilty as a result, but the individual still committed the crime and the fee is appropriate
- Plea agreements can result in a conviction of a different crime associated with the original crime
- Drug forfeiture law v. general forfeiture law
- Board member belief the settlement agreement takes legal precedence and it no longer matters whether the person was convicted
- Moral obligation to refund the “ransom” if the individual is not convicted

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Veenstra, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: Trustees Scales, Styka, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie
Motion failed 2-5.

Trustee Styka moved to begin the process of overhauling the Township website and branding up to an amount of \$30,000. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: Trustee Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie
Motion carried 4-3.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS
Supervisor LeGoff opened and closed public remarks.

5. ADJOURNMENT
Supervisor LeGoff adjourned the meeting at 2:56 P.M.

ELIZABETH LEGOFF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary