

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517-349-1232, Virtual Meeting via Zoom
TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020 **6:00 pm.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Director of Public Works Perry, Fire Chief Hamel, Police Chief Plaga, Information Technology Director Gebes, Economic Development Director Lane, Finance Director Mattison, HR Director Marx, (new) HR Director Tithof, Parks and Recreation Director Maisner, Community Planning Director Kielselbach; Principal Planner Menser, Communications Manager Yates,

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Dreyfus called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Introduction of New Police Officers Jordan Kuhn by Police Chief Plaga. Officer Travis Quimby will be presented at a future meeting for introduction.

B. Introduction of new HR Director Abigail (Abby) Tithof

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:06 pm.

Scott Comer, Protégé Academy, 4960, 62, 64 and 66 Northview Drive, opposed Special Use Permit for the provisional medical marijuana site in their area.

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:11 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Township Manager reported Silverleaf Development Proposal on Bennett Road – neighborhood Zoom meeting on this project is scheduled for Thursday, July 30, at 6 pm; Marketplace on the Green construction project is progressing; will be paying cash for new ladder truck in 2021, looking for a site for emergency siren installation in the northern part of the township; HVAC installation has been suspended due to worker testing positive for COVID but will be back after August election; attended Village of Okemos meeting on demolishing existing buildings.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clerk Dreyfus:

- Election report: Election in two weeks; absentee ballot applications taken through August 3; can register to vote up to August 4;
- Township & State of Michigan have mailed out (approximately) 29,500 Absent Voter Ballot Applications to residents; received 12,500 applications; mailed out 12,200 ballots; and received back 5,000 ballots.
- Election worker shortage, working on staffing precincts with the mandatory minimum of three staff per precinct but are planning for four. Working with Secretary of State on sharing their pool of election workers; absentee counting board has many workers so need creative layout in Nelson Room for social distancing.

Treasurer Deschaine

- Tax bills have been mailed out, call office if need copy of tax bill. Can pay at the outdoor pod, place payment in drop box or pay online. Due date is September 14.
- Attended July 8 Michigan Municipal Treasurers Association Treasurer training
- Attended July 9 EDC Meeting
- Attended July 10 MABA Meeting
- Attended July 13 DDA Meeting
- Attended July 15 East Lansing Meridian Water & Sewer Authority Annual Meeting; it was stated the Authority has the best water in region due to Covid-19 management; heard about preventative maintenance
- Attended July 16 Brownfield Authority Meeting
- Attended overview of Ingham County's response to Covid-19 presented by Ingham County Health Department Director on July 21. Science-based approach builds feeling of safety.

Supervisor Styka

- Attended DDA meeting
- Received an update from MSU President on dealing with Covid-19
- Attended meeting with Okemos Village developer about the building demolition project being completed this year

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Jackson moved to approve the Agenda. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 7 – 0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Trustee Wisinski, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 - 0

A. Communications

Treasurer Deschaine 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 Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Trustee Wisinski, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 - 0

B. Approval of Minutes – July 7, 2020 Regular Meeting

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the Virtual Regular Meeting of July 7, 2020 as submitted. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson, Opsommer, Trustee Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Trustee Wisinski, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. Bills

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows: Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus

Common Cash	\$ 516,575.66
Public Works	\$ 357,074.41
Trust & Agency	<u>\$ 39,681.02</u>
Total Checks	\$ 913,331.09
Credit Card Transactions	\$ 7,791.22
July 1 to July 14, 2020	
Total Purchases	<u>\$ 921,122.31</u>
ACH Payments	<u>\$ 606,080.20</u>

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

D. Groundwater Management Board – Alternate #2 Appointment

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve Chief Engineer Younes Ishraidi as alternate delegate #2 for the Charter Township of Meridian on the Groundwater Management Board. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson, Opsommer, Trustee Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Trustee Wisinski, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS - NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Environmental Commission appointment

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the appointment of Luca Wisinski to the Environmental Commission for a term ending 12/31/2021. Seconded by Trustee Jackson

Board discussion:

Question asked about the age of the appointee; Luca Wisinski is 15 years old and will be a sophomore at Okemos High School, question about age requirements for Boards and Commissions, appointment is to fill designated “Student Member” of the Environmental Commission, if the appointment is for a non-voting member then the age should not be an issue, previous appointee was under age of 18, concern about students for township boards and commissions in the future if limited to above the age of 18.

Trustee Opsommer read rule 3.1 from Environmental Commission Rules and Procedures, he stated “two student members shall be appointed, and these two members shall be voting members.” Concern over Student Members being able to vote.

Supervisor Styka tabled item until next meeting.

B. Ratification of Meridian Township Firefighters Association Labor Agreement 2020-2024

Township Manager summarized five-year agreement on wages, retiree health care coverage, defined contribution plan and pension.

Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the 2020-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement as tentatively agreed to and further ratified by the Meridian Township Firefighters Association. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Board discussion:

This contract mirrors the police patrol contract for new police hires, patrol personnel hired in last few years with 1.75 multiplier have requested to move to the 7% retiree health savings account, firefighters will also be receiving additional 10% Township contribution to their defined benefit plan, five year agreement instead of three, benefits budgeting process and avoids negotiations and arbitrations, majority of fire department personnel support contract.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 - 0

C. Nemoka Drain Roadwork Intergovernmental Agreement

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve and execute the Nemoka Drain Roadwork Improvements Intergovernmental Agreement between the Charter Township of Meridian and the Ingham County Drain Commissioner as presented. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Board discussion:

Deputy Manager reported Shaw, Edson and Potter Roads are in disrepair, Township held off re-surfacing until completion of Nemoka Drain project, partnership with the Township to complete the necessary roadwork along with the drain project, roads will be resurfaced and a pathway installed along Shaw to connect to Haslett to Lake Lansing South.

Asset management used to coordinate infrastructure projects to minimize interruptions and discomfort as projects are executed, preliminary work started, no pathway on the west side of Shaw, existing sidewalk on Haslett Road and Lake Drive on the east side, install pathway on the east side of Shaw Drive up to Lake Lansing, may be relocated to the west side in order to provide a safe connection from downtown Haslett to Lake Lansing Park.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 - 0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Meridian Township Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan

Board Discussion:

Informal meetings among board members and staff on how to proceed, recommendation by several Trustees to create a Community Equity and Inclusion Task Force, Trustees Jackson, Wisinski and Opsommer volunteered to be appointed to the Task Force, asked to have the Township Manager and three members of the leadership team also appointed.

Trustee Jackson moved to waive the rules and consider the motion to establish the task force and appoint board members to it. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Board discussion:

Important to start conversation on equity and inclusion, long-term plan but need to start with Task Force now, Board member concern about suspending the rules and taking action now instead of at next Board meeting, previous hot topic issues don't warrant suspension of rules, residents need time between meetings to provide input to Board, such as this one and is concerned with suspending the rules to proceed violates the principles without proper notification to residents of the board's actions.

Formation of a task force was decided by group of Trustees that met in order to have the framework for a facilitator to come in, belief that establishing a task force is a small step and waiting two weeks is not necessary, an individual who has a background in Diversity and Inclusion has expressed interest in assisting with the task force.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Wisinski, Treasurer Deschaine, Supervisor Styka, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland

NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus

Motion carried: 6 - 1

Trustee Jackson moved to establish a Community Equity and Inclusion Task Force and to appoint Board Trustees Patricia Jackson, Courtney Wisinski and Dan Opsommer to serve on the Task Force. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Board discussion:

Task force is to assist in identifying people who represent the community, have experts to guide the township to identify and include all of the different Township populations and making the township equitable for them, long-term process, Township includes diversity in its goals, working toward including equity and inclusion.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Land Preservation Millage Renewal

Board discussion:

\$2.7 million in the Endowment Fund, only the interest can be spent and there is spendable millage funds of \$4.4 million; question regarding amount of additional acres that can be purchased based on how much was spent to purchase the existing 970 acres in the past. Parks Director reported the Land Preservation Program Endowment Fund yields approximately \$467,000 spendable interest to be used for preservation, stewardship and maintenance in perpetuity. 25% of the original millage of .75 mills created the endowment.

Millage was renewed in 2010 at a reduced rate of .33 mills, spendable fund balance of \$4.37 million. Land Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) has had many discussions, original goal was for 600 acres (10% of the high quality environmental sensitive lands in the Township), and to date has acquired 968 acres. Efforts now redirected to stewardship (invasive species removal, tree planting, reforestation projects, control burns, engaging residents and school students through their science programs, etc.) The LPAB is interested in a renewal at reduced .10 millage rate to insure maintaining and managing the properties.

Questions about right renewal rate and what funds could/should be used for. Parks Director stated when properties were acquired, a detailed stewardship plan was developed for each, . LPAB plans the management, stewardship projects and activities over a three-year period, Land Preservation Program is 20 years old, approximately 700 acres were purchased in the first ten years as part of acquisition plan similar to parks, and then 200-300 acres in last ten years, additional lands have been vetted when applications when submitted, program is one of the first of its kind in the state and is unique.

Question about staffing needs of program, discussion on purchasing land, cost per acre, need for new land vs maintenance, popular program with citizens, proactive approach along with public/private partnerships, greenbelt concepts around the state, decreasing vs increasing the millage request, community input on this issue would be helpful, invasive species removal is labor intensive and questions about staffing and use of volunteers.

Board consensus to place this item on next Board meeting agenda.

C. EMS-Fire Department Millage Renewal

Township Manager stated in 2004 voters approved a 16-year millage for revenue for the fire department, millage expires in 2020. The levy in 2004 was .6445 mills and it has rolled back to .6339 mills. Ballot recommendation is for .6339 mills because if request original millage, it will state "millage increase" on the ballot. The recommendation of .6339 mills for 16 years, through 2035 will generate approximately \$1.2 million/year.

Board discussion:

Popular millage, Township needs the dedicated police and fire millage, one of the lowest millage rates compared to other municipalities, essential and high-quality services means cannot cut corners, additional millage passed several years ago to address pension liability but it did cover additional police and fire staffing, concern with having enough funds to for future payroll and potential health care cost increases.

First Fire Department millage was for 16 years; next one can be any timeframe but 16 year proposal will assist with long-term planning and the ability to cover funding needs, worked well for the past 16 year millage.

Board consensus to place this item on the next Board meeting agenda.

D. Police Department Millage Renewal Mileage

Township Manager stated the Police Millage Renewal is less than the Fire Millage Renewal. In 2004, voters approved a millage rate of .6117 for 16 years and the recommendation is .6016

millage for 16 years. It will generate approximately \$1.24 million dollars, which is \$60-70,000 less per year than the Fire Millage.

Board discussion:

Previous Township Boards and voters has approved this millage, relatively small millages for police and fire departments as compared to other communities with populations above 30,000; one reason why a third millage was needed.

Board consensus to place this item on the next Board meeting agenda.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 7:41 pm.

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 7:43pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - None

16. CLOSED SESSION- To consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute, specifically to discuss a legal memo subject to attorney-client privilege from Township Prosecutor Cullen Harkness, regarding status of Meridian Township vs. EMachines.

Trustee Jackson moved that the Board move into closed session for the purpose stated by the Supervisor, pursuant to the Open Meetings Act in order to review attorney advice with regard to a pending legal case, Meridian Township vs Emachines, et.al, and Daniel White. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 - 0

Township Board entered into closed session at 7:46 pm.

Clerk Dreyfus moved to reopen the session. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 - 0

Township Board returned to open session at 8:09 pm

17. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Opsommer moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 7-0

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 8:10 pm.

RONALD STYKA
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS,
TOWNSHIP CLERK