



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864  
Administrative Conference Room  
Wednesday, August 7, 2019 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Chair, Walter Benenson; Commissioner, Leslie Charles; Commissioner, Brian Seipel; Commissioner, Mike Nevells;  
ABSENT: Vice-Chair, Tunga Kiyak; Alternate Commissioner, Kevin Thatcher; Alternate Commissioner, Reti Adhi  
STAFF: Frank Walsh, Township Manager; Derek Perry, Deputy Township Manager; Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director; Brandie Yates, Executive Producer  
TOWNSHIP: Kathy Sundland, Meridian Township Board Trustee  
COUNSEL: Mike Watza, Kitch Law Firm  
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 Charles moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Chair Benenson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**6. \*TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT**

Discussion about the proposed plan to restructure and reorganize the Communications Department based on the 2020 Township Budget and the loss in revenue from Franchise and PEG Fees.

\*Parts of this discussion are unavailable due to technical difficulties.

**7. \*TOWNSHIP BOARD LIAISON'S REPORT**

\*This discussion is unavailable due to technical difficulties.

**9A. \*HOMTV OPERATING POLICIES**

Recommended changes added to the agenda for the Communications Commission October 2, 2019 meeting.

\*Parts of this discussion are unavailable due to technical difficulties.

**9B. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Chair Benenson moved **TO APPROVE REMOVING THIS TOPIC FROM THIS AGENDA AND FUTURE AGENDAS**. Seconded by Commissioner Charles.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Benenson moved **TO APPROVE ADDING PRINCIPAL, MIKE WATZA FROM KITCH LAW FIRM TO THIS AGENDA**. Seconded by Commissioner Charles.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

\*Discussion about how the Franchise and PEG fees are at risk. Recommended to preserve your channels, do not give them up; you will have to fight hard to get them back. The channels must continue to be utilized. Commission asked the question about future revenues and the comment is that future revenues are still uncertain at this time.

\*Parts of this discussion are unavailable due to technical difficulties.

**10A. COMPLIMENTS/COMPLAINTS**

Commissioner Seipel complimented Comcast about an outage in his neighborhood. A large tree took out the power and Comcast service. Comcast and Consumers worked together to get everything back up and running.

**11A. VIDEO SERVICE PROVIDER**

Internet Essentials is expanding to every low-income family. Can qualify through additional services. Recommended that John Gardner make a presentation about Internet Essentials to the Township Board and the Community Resource Commission. Computers now come with full Microsoft Office suite.

**11B. HOMTV PROGRAMMING**

Update provided about program restructuring based on staffing availability and policy requirements. HOMTV received national recognition and an award, HOME TOWN Award.

Commission asked about availability of grants for programming.

Announcement that Communications Director will be attending the National NATOA conference in September and serving on a panel about Diversity in the News.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Chair Benenson adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.