



AGENDA

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF
MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
November 16, 2015
1:00 P.M.



-
1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER+
 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
 3. ROLL CALL
 4. 2016 TOWNSHIP BOARD GOAL SETTING
 5. PUBLIC REMARKS*
 6. ADJOURNMENT

*PUBLIC REMARKS (Any topic - 3 minutes per person)

*Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Board by writing or calling the following:
Township Manager Frank L. Walsh, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198 (517-853-4258) – Ten Day Notice is Required.*

Meridian Charter Township: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198, (517) 853-4000 Township Hall Room; www.meridian.mi.us

+ Appointment of President Pro Tem and/or Temporary Clerk if necessary

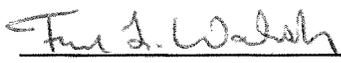
Meridian Township exists to create a sustainable community through the most effective use of available resources that achieve the highest quality of life.

2016 Township Board Goal Setting Meeting November 16, 2015

1. Township Manager's Overview
2. Financial Outlook
3. 2015 Summary Review
4. 2016 DRAFT Goals
5. 2016 Key Objectives
6. Questions – Comments – Edits – Revisions –
Board Direction

MEMORANDUM

TO: Township Board

FROM: 
Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager

DATE: November 13, 2015

RE: 2016 Goal Setting

First of all, I want to thank the Township Board for the opportunity to serve as Township Manager during the past year. There is no question that 2015 provided many opportunities and challenges for our team. Our team worked diligently to serve our residents in an exemplary manner. The proof is in the results, and I am thankful for the team that surrounds me as we look to build on our success in 2016.

As I look back to the previous 12 months, I am appreciative of our customer service response to over 1,000 requests for service and code enforcement issues. Our Community Planning and Development Department handled hundreds of complaints and at the same time welcomed approximately \$52,000,000 in new investment. We are fortunate to have steady leadership in a very challenging environment. I admire our Director's 36-year commitment to Meridian Township.

After the closure of the former Central Fire Station in February, the Township Board set a goal to make vast improvements to our facilities. This past summer we replaced the roof at two of our buildings, refurbished the town hall room, reconstructed the municipal parking lot and installed new LED lights, resurfaced 15 Township streets, and repaired the asphalt issues at the service center. We planned for and delivered \$900,000 in improvements without incurring any debt. The ability to make these improvements with cash is unparalleled in most Michigan communities. The old adage is, "Take care of what you have before you build new."

The Township Board also noted the need to improve our public safety fleet. In 2015, we committed to purchasing a new fire truck, an ambulance, and three new police cars. The total new investment in our public safety fleet totaled \$721,000. Again, at the direction of the governing body, we improved our delivery of public safety with no debt. We also made significant progress with the construction of the new Central Fire Station. Through steadfast support, the Board and our team huddled this project through several minefields. We plan to open the new station in January 2016. The best news is that we will not spend the entire \$3.5M voter-approved bond from November 2012. If the current financial model does not change, we will have approximately \$52,000 remaining in the bond fund. This may not sound like much; however, just 15 months ago we were \$1,330,000 over budget regarding the fire station project. We certainly appreciate the generous support from the Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club and the Whirlpool Corporation for their combined gifts of \$23,000 towards the new station.

It is noteworthy that our two chiefs have combined nearly 80 years of public safety experience between them. It is no wonder our residents trust and appreciate our police and fire departments.

The Parks and Recreation Department offered many upgrades in 2015 to our award winning park system. The improvements at Wonch Park, Newton Road Park, Brattin Woods Park, and Ted Black Woods all exemplify the outstanding parks system we offer our residents. Our deer management program took an unusual turn in 2015 with the May announcement that Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was located in Meridian Township. Through the process, there were over 1,000 taken in the Township. The Michigan DNR honored the Township for our ability and desire to partner with their team in fighting CWD. Great parks do not just happen. Our Parks Department leadership is on display at all 29 parks.

Our Communications Department hit a grand slam with our Comcast negotiations. We were able to get Comcast officials to agree to a Peg (Public, Education and Government) Fee for the first time. The end result is over \$110,000 of additional revenue to operate our highly recognized HOMTV. We also added a new program Guide for Channel 21 as a part of our talks with Comcast. There is no question, our Communications leadership led to positive changes for our residents.

Our Finance Department was strong and steady in 2015. The 2016 Budget was adopted, the 2014 Audit was performed, and we were able to trim expenses enough to set aside \$1,000,000 in additional revenue to help fund our \$23,000,000 legacy debt. It is important not to overlook the rigid monitoring controls put in place by our Finance Director. Bringing the payroll back in-house is an example of the changes she and the Human Resources Director have brought to the organization.

Among many other unforeseen duties, Human Resources took on the major task of revamping our Personnel Policy Manual in 2015. The last time we updated our handbook the Detroit Lions had won a playoff game. After more than two decades, I applaud our Human Resources Director for her willingness to walk down such a difficult journey. If this were an easy process, it would have been completed 10-15 years ago.

Our Assessing Department was able to settle 11 tax appeals successfully in 2015. Through the Department's effort, we minimized the expense to the Township taxpayers and held our ground offering minor reductions to our 11 plaintiffs. We are more than fortunate to have East Lansing's cooperation in sharing our Assessor. He knows when to settle and he knows when to fight on.

The Information Technology (IT) Department managed through some important internal tasks this year while being short staffed the entire year. Our IT team deserves a hearty thank you for not missing a step with one hand tied behind their back. By December 1 of this year, we will be back at full strength and hitting on all cylinders. The most important task looking forward is the implementation of our new phone system.

It was an extremely busy year for our Public Works and Engineering Department. Not only did we lose three team members to retirement and an external job offer, we chose to completely reorganize the Department. In doing so, we vastly improved our communication, service delivery, and organizational prowess. The reorganization will save us over \$85,000

in annual expenses. Our new Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works has met the challenges well and managed a multitude of public works projects during his 7-month tenure.

In summary, I trust the following comprehensive report will address any questions you may have regarding our accomplishments in 2015. There is no question that high hurdles remain in front of us. The Township has a staggering pension debt, our Master Plan needs to move forward and be completed in 2016, our seven union contracts are set to expire next year, Haslett Village Square, Carriage Hills and Downtown Okemos need a boost, and we should look for other opportunities, such as the 2015 reorganization, to reduce the cost of government.

I would be remiss if I did not publicly acknowledge and thank my Executive Assistant Carol Hasse. Carol is a diligent and loyal member of our team, and I am more than appreciative of her work across all departments.

Jim Collins, in his book Good to Great, describes the need to get the right people on the bus and set ostentatious goals for your organization. We have the right team and we look forward to another year of unbridled success.

2016 Township Goal Setting

November 16, 2015

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

December 31, 2015 Audited GF Fund Balance 7,113,030

2015 Projects

Town Hall Renovations	24,000
Re-roof service center and garage	158,000
Renovate women's restrooms	16,000
Repave municipal complex lot and drives	260,000
Replace pole lights municipal complex	78,000
Reroof and add soffit - north fire station	25,000
Repave lot and side exit at service center	65,000
Furniture for the Central Fire Station	140,000
Additional Funding to Local Roads	49,600
Total 2015 Projects	<u>815,600</u>

December 31, 2015 Anticipated GF Fund Balance 6,740,575

2016 Projects

Additional Payment to MERS	1,000,000
1/2 Parks Master Plan (parks pays other half)	15,000
New Telephone System	235,750
Township Branding and Website	80,000
Repave North and South Fire Station Lots	67,000
Pole Barn at Central Fire Station	70,000
Additional Funding to Local Roads for 2015 ADA costs	200,000
Additional Funding to Local Roads	50,000
Total 2016 Projects	<u>1,717,750</u>

December 31, 2016 Anticipated GF Fund Balance 5,523,008

Accounting & Budgeting Department

2015 Summary Review

GOAL #1 ENVIRONMENT

Meridian Township staff in the Utility Billing and Public Works Departments noticed that several water meters of a certain model number were faulty and stopped providing readings of water usage. Several meetings with our vendor resulted in an agreement that had a third party replace the meters in question at no cost to the Township for either the labor or parts. While the parts and labor were free, it took a tremendous amount of planning, implementation, and coordination between staff from Utility Billing and Public Works and the workers from the third party vendor. During a two week period in March 2015, over 400 residential and commercial meters were replaced. This replacement allowed the Township to accurately bill for water usage and reduce the annual water loss.

GOAL #2 PUBLIC SAFETY

The Meridian Township Police Department, in conjunction with the Accounting and Budgeting Department, continued to administer the Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) Traffic Grants. In addition to administering our own grants, the Township is the fiduciary administrator of the grants for the Ingham County Sheriff's Office, the East Lansing Police Department, the Lansing Police Department, and Michigan State University Police.

These grants reimburse the departments for overtime costs related to click-it-or-ticket and impaired driving patrols.

GOAL #4 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Treasurer Brixie and Directors Gomolka and Kieselbach began discussions on improving the process and the timing of the invoicing for annual rental registration renewals and inspections. They will continue to work on this process in late 2015 and early 2016.

GOAL #5 ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The following items were completed in 2015:

- The 2014 Consolidated Annual Financial Report (CAFR) was issued with an unmodified opinion on May 5, 2015. We were once again awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.
- The 2016 budget was adopted by the Township Board on September 15, 2015.
- The 2015 projected ending fund balance is \$6,647,575 and the 2016 budgeted ending fund balance is \$5,530,008. These numbers are in excess of the Board directed minimum fund balance of \$5,250,000

During the year, Meridian Township implemented BS&A's AccessMyGov-Internet Services, which is the first step towards implementing the click-and-pay function for utility bills on the Township's website. The Township's current third party provider (PNC) has made improvements to their website interface during the year, making it easier for residents to use. Throughout 2015, staff in Utility Billing increased the number of customers enrolled in on-line bill pay enrollment by 483 (14.3%), and they continue to work with residents to get more of them enrolled.

Township Manager Walsh and Directors Gomolka and Marx met with Marne Carlson, the Township's representative for the MERS pension plan. Subsequent to this meeting, Ms. Carlson was invited to present information on our pension plan to the Township Board members and Departments Directors. In November 2015, management will be meeting with Ms. Carlson again to discuss our options in reducing the existing pension liability. At the conclusion of the meeting, we will direct MERS to process selected scenarios and provide us with estimated outcomes. In early 2015, Director Gomolka and Treasurer Brixie made the decision to pre-fund our monthly MERS contributions for the year. This resulted in interest earnings on our pension plan assets higher than would have been earned in our traditional bank accounts. This additional interest works towards reducing our overall unfunded liability. Additionally, as a part of the 2016 budget adoption process, the Township Board approved a \$1,000,000 contribution above and beyond our annual required contribution to the MERS plan.

Assessing Department 2015 Summary Review

GOAL #4 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

With the assistance of intern labor, the Assessing Department completed its 2015 assessment/reinspection project involving selected taxable properties. Assessment records for the areas selected for this year's program were updated primarily from an office review, with field inspections occurring as needed. The project was completed on schedule. The periodic review of assessment records is an important aspect of a sound assessing operation.

GOAL #5 ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Assessing Department devoted significant resources to the defense of appeals to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. The Township currently has 10 pending Entire Tribunal appeals. Of these 10 cases, 5 are new for 2015 and 5 are 2014 appeals with the 2015 tax year added to them. A relatively small percentage of the Township's tax base is currently under appeal. Over the past two quarters, settlement discussions have occurred for 6 cases, agreements to resolve 3 of the cases have been reached, and settlement appears imminent in 2 more cases. For 1 case, it was not possible to resolve the matter through settlement talks and independent appraisals were performed by both sides. It appears that it will be necessary to defend the assessment in that case at a hearing; pre-trial work is being coordinated with the Township's attorney. The case load for Small Claims appeals is considered to be normal for 2015. Reasonable efforts to resolve Small Claims cases are being made and, if resolution is not warranted, Small Claims cases will be defended at hearing. The philosophy of the Assessing Department in dealing with Michigan Tax Tribunal cases is to be reasonable in settlement negotiations but to defend appeals which are without merit vigorously, thereby helping to ensure the Township's economic prosperity.

GOAL #8 COMMUNICATIONS

The Assessing Department places a high priority on providing quality customer service and responding to all inquiries in a timely, professional, and efficient manner. In fact, the provision of assessment information to property owners and their representatives (e.g., real estate agents, title company employees, private real estate appraisers, etc.) has been improved. As required by law, the Assessing Department makes its appraisal record cards and assessment rolls available for inspection in its offices during normal business hours. Additionally, assessment information is made available at all times via the Township's website, and Assessing Department staff respond to inquiries by phone and email to provide assessment information. During the second quarter, the Township transitioned to a third party vendor for the provision of assessment information via the Internet. This transition represented a significant improvement in the delivery of information by supplying the information in a standard format that is used by the vast majority of municipalities in Michigan and by supplying commercial and industrial assessment information which had not previously been available from the Township via the Internet.

Communications/HOMTV Department

2015 Summary Review

GOAL #2 PUBLIC SAFETY

HOMTV offers a monthly program, Beyond the Badge, which focuses on public safety by exploring the efforts of police, fire, and other safety organizations in Meridian Township, Ingham County, and the State of Michigan. This informative program includes safety demonstrations and interviews with Meridian Township Police and Fire Departments. In 2015, the major topics within the show included home heating safety, severe weather safety tips, new Central Fire Station updates, distracted driving scenarios, the neighborhood watch program, and self-defense demonstrations and training.

The Communications Department assisted the Fire Department in maintaining their social media presence on Facebook and Twitter by providing daily/weekly safety tips, Department training updates, and community involvement.

GOAL #4 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Three major agreements were reached this year with video service providers in the Township. After extensive negotiations with Comcast regarding the Transfer of Control and the franchise agreement, Meridian and Comcast came to terms on both issues midway through the year. Although Comcast decided to not go through with the transfer of the company to GreatLand Connections, Meridian ended up with \$12,500 in settlement fees on the matter. Meridian also agreed to a new uniform franchise agreement with Comcast. Meridian will continue to receive 5% franchise fees and collect an additional 1% PEG (Public, Education and Government) fee from Comcast's annual gross subscriber revenues in Meridian Township. This new amount will result in over \$100,000 of additional revenue for the Cable TV Special Revenue Fund. Also, as part of the Comcast Franchise Agreement, Comcast wrote a letter of authorization allowing PEG programming on the guide system(s). Any PEG channel that is on the same channel across the Comcast Meridian Township and East Lansing system is to the guide system. The HOMTV Program Guide information is being updated on a weekly basis and is viewable on Comcast's guide channel. Prior to receiving the uniform franchise, staff and legal counsel met with Comcast to discuss a side agreement to allow HD for PEG channels. After several days and discussions about the agreement, it was determined that staff and Comcast would be unable to come to terms on a separate agreement. The Communications Department determined that the costs of being able to receive one HD channel outweighed the benefits. Comcast would have required five PEG channels to be relinquished in order for Meridian Township to have one of the nine PEG channels broadcast with an HD Signal. Staff agreed it would be best to continue our current PEG channel capacity, providing an LCC Channel, three MSU channels, Haslett School Channel, Okemos School Channel, HOMTV Government Access Channel, and CAMTV Public Access Channel. HOMTV will continue recording field stories in HD and will move forward with the plans to upgrade its studio cameras to HD for higher quality Township and studio recordings. Doing so will ensure a higher quality playback online due to less degradation of the signal.

An AT&T group audit was led by the Communications Director for the time period of January 2012 to December 2013, resulting in Meridian receiving a settlement agreement in the amount of \$11,369. Additional revenues collected will contribute to an upgrade and replacement of equipment between 2015 and 2020.

Convergent Media Designs was hired to install and implement a new PA system in the Town Hall in lieu of the old system failing. The installation is 90 percent complete and will be finalized in November 2015.

As part of the Township's initiative to become a Smart Community, the Communications Director attended a Michigan Broadband Conference highlighting best practices and insight into leveraging technology for improved community and economic development, education, digital literacy, healthcare, and workforce development.

GOAL #5 ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Economic prosperity continues to be enhanced within the Township in a number of ways, including the launch of a new Township website, a new Township brand, and by maintaining a positive working relationship with Michigan State University.

The department is leading two major projects for the Township, the development and implementation of a new brand and branding campaign, as well as a complete overhaul and redesign of the Township website. The website redesign will be worked into the branding campaign. Staff is coordinating efforts for these two projects in order to meet the goals and objectives of the branding campaign. We have an aggressive plan to move both efforts forward concurrently, launching a newly designed website and brand by early 2016. The new website will be vastly different than the current site in that it will be much more visitor friendly, business friendly, and residential friendly.

Continuing a positive working relationship with MSU, the Department created a Meridian Township Asset Brochure and supplied more than 1,000 copies to the MSU Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) and the MSU Office for International Students and Scholars for visitors looking for information to settle in to the area. HOMTV and CAMTV were once again media sponsors for the MSU Safe Place "Race for the Place" event in April. Event promotion and coverage across multiple platforms was provided to help increase awareness of the services the MSU Safe Place has to offer.

GOAL #6 DIVERSITY

From HOMTV programming to social media campaigns, the Communications Department promotes and enhances diversity across the Township. HOMTV will have aired more than 300 different shows in 2015 featuring Police and Fire stories, Township meetings, resident spotlights, Township events, safety demonstrations for senior citizens, pedestrians and drivers on walkways and roadways, construction updates, tax payment information, new businesses coming to Meridian, and local school sporting events and fundraisers.

Interviews and news stories were also produced on the Chinese educators visiting Haslett High School to observe an American classroom, Meridian Township's Heritage Festival, Action of Greater Lansing organization meetings dealing with community issues such as immigration, the Women's Center of Greater Lansing events and activities promoting women's history, and the Haslett High School Black Student Union. The Department assisted with the promotion of the Chinese New Year Celebration, Nokomis Learning Center activities, and the Meridian Heritage Festival through social media outlets, press releases, information on the Township website, and promotional spots airing on HOMTV. Information and history was also shared on the Meridian

Township Facebook and Twitter accounts during Black History Month and Women's History Month.

Closed captioning costs and staffing to manage closed captioning for HOMTV's broadcasts will continue to be explored in 2016.

Staff also attended a number of career fairs, such as Michigan State University's Diversity Career Fair that attracts more than 2,300 students of different ethnicities and backgrounds to diversify recruitment and hiring for the HOMTV internship program. The Communications Department assists the Human Resources Department with promoting Township employment opportunities on the Township website, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and career boards at various colleges and universities.

GOAL #8 CONSTITUENT COMMUNICATIONS

The most up-to-date information on Township events, meetings, employment opportunities, and services is provided through the use of social media, press releases, eNewsletters, print materials, and HOMTV programming. The Department has increased public engagement and participation by developing and implementing two new eNewsletters - HOMTV Top Stories and Meridian Weekly Updates. By driving social media campaigns such as the Parks and Recreation "#fanfriday" Facebook campaign, which increased followers by 122%, and by promoting monthly blogs from the Township Manager and the HOMTV Interns, which have generated 300-1000 views year to date, the Communications Department continues to extend the Township's reach.

As part of an ongoing effort to provide excellent communications to the community, Department staff began working with Public Works & Engineering on the stormwater management campaign, creating public service announcement videos to air on HOMTV and by providing a social media campaign, as well as website updates to remain in compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

Great strides have been made in bringing news, information and events, in both digital and print formats to the public. New and progressive ways of communicating were implemented in 2015, including event planning and coordinating, live coverage at major Township events, and increased community engagement through new social media technology. The Department sponsored and hosted the Spring Media Conference which provided us the opportunity to showcase live tweets of the event. Staff also incorporated remote live cut-ins on the HOMTV channel for the Celebrate Downtown Okemos event, the New Central Fire Station ground breaking ceremony, and the new Pedestrian Pathway Bridge ribbon cutting ceremony.

The department is also working with the Cable Communications Commission on conducting a Communications Needs Assessment. This assessment, along with the Township branding campaign and website redesign, will enhance and strengthen brand awareness and visibility within the Township.

GOAL #9 NEIGHBORHOODS AND ELIMINATE BLIGHT

Currently, there are no regulations allowing for Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS) in the rights of way and are specifically prohibited in the Metro Act language. This is a national issue and we will continue to monitor and look at options to increase the compliance of communications companies.

Community Planning & Development Department

2015 Summary Review

GOAL #1 ENVIRONMENT

LED lighting is being incorporated into development projects. Preservation of existing trees, 12 inches dbh or larger, has been successful on two redevelopment projects along Grand River Avenue.

GOAL #2 PUBLIC SAFETY

Staff completed the review of the 2012 edition of the Property Maintenance Code and will be presenting the updated version for the Board's consideration in 2016.

To better educate the public on code enforcement, an HOM-TV reporter has been riding with the Code Enforcement Officer to develop a segment for television.

Use the Grand River Corridor Access Management Ordinance to consolidate or eliminate driveways from new developments along Grand River Avenue.

Staff continued to provide support and education to residents and neighborhood associations on code enforcement through the Code Enforcement Committee and the Police Department Citizen's Academy.

GOAL #4 PUBLIC SERVICES

A committee of members from the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Planning Commission, and staff have worked on potential changes to the commercial sign ordinance. A report from the committee on the changes was presented to both the EDC and Planning Commission.

GOAL #5 ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Activities associated with the 2005 Master Plan update included ongoing information gathering and draft revisions to text and charts in various chapters (demographics, housing, existing land use, natural features, infrastructure, and transportation). Master Plan maps have or are in the process of being updated to capture the most current information available. The Planning Commission held a public input meeting on May 21, 2015, successfully gathering community ideas related to the seven Master Plan goals to incorporate into the Plan. Requests for Qualifications to prepare an updated Master Plan were sent out to potential consultants. Six responses were received and three consultants were chosen to submit proposals. The Planning Commission is finalizing the Request for Proposals at this time.

Completed another successful "Celebrate Downtown Okemos" event.

Three of the proposed mixed use planned unit development projects are redevelopment or reuse of existing sites.

Staff continued to visit new and existing businesses. Thirty new businesses were assisted through the permit process and sixteen grand openings/ribbon cuttings were facilitated.

Researched and vetted potential developers of the MARC/Fire Station property. Continue to work closely with the selected developer on demolition of the fire station and submitting a site plan for the project.

Multi-modes of transportation including CATA bus stops, internal 5-foot side sidewalks, connections to the Township pedestrian/bicycle pathway system, and open and covered bicycle parking have been provided for the mixed use planned unit development projects along Grand River Avenue.

GOAL #6 DIVERSITY

Encouragement of the use of higher quality building material for commercial and mixed use planned unit development projects. Three mixed use planned unit development projects have designated units within the development as affordable housing units for residents with income below 80 percent of the Area Median Income scale.

GOAL #9 NEIGHBORHOODS

The Code Enforcement Officer hours have been increased from 25 to 29 per week. The priority is to strengthen enforcement in residential neighborhoods. The officer works one Saturday per month in an effort to talk to people when they are at home.

EMS/Fire Department 2015 Summary Review

GOAL #1 ENVIRONMENT

Staff has worked to incorporate as many green technologies as possible as well as preserving trees on the site of the new fire station.

GOAL #2 PUBLIC SAFETY

Construction of the new fire station continues. Occupancy is scheduled for January 1, 2016. MTFD continued to post on social media as well as providing interviews with HOM-TV interns. The new ambulance has been placed in service. Work continued with other fire departments as the Lansing Regional Fire Shared Services including renewing the contract to provide fire/rescue services to the northern portion of Alaiedon Township. In addition, we have received AVI equipment, a new heart monitor, and an automated CPR machine as part of a regional grant. MTFD continued to send out surveys to its customers and will include detailed information about the outcome in the annual report.

GOAL #8 COMMUNICATIONS

MTFD continued to respond to all citizen requests for assistance. BBQ pit permit registration and renewal was offered online in 2015 for the first time. To date, 527 permits have been registered or renewed online this year. Staff continued to work with the IT Department to enhance our communication with Dispatch.

GOAL #9 NEIGHBORHOODS

The Fire Department was able to accommodate all requests for prescribed burns within the Township.

Human Resources Department

2015 Summary Review

Although there were numerous projects, both planned and unplanned for 2015, the following goals were set and accomplished with the help of administrative support (Carol Hasse and Heather Baker).

GOAL #1 BRINGING PAYROLL BACK IN-HOUSE

The conversion from the outsourced ADP Payroll system to the in-house BS&A payroll system was completed on-time as a seamless process. There have been all positive comments from employees, particularly when looking at the efficiency of the email/paperless process for pay statements and direct deposit for timely accounting. Back-up support and training is now complete.

GOAL #2 NEW PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

After 23 years, the newly written Personnel Policy Manual is in a final draft form with the anticipated implementation date of January 1, 2016.

GOAL #3 MAINTAINING HEALTHCARE COVERAGE AND REASONABLE COSTS

The Township was able to maintain current coverage through a competitive bidding process which allowed for no premium sharing and Township contributions to Health Savings Accounts (HSA's). Continued implementation of PA 152 (Affordable Care Act) requirements will present challenges for future healthcare coverage considerations in 2016 and beyond.

GOAL #4 EVALUATION OF MERS PENSION PLANS & TOWNSHIP UNFUNDED LIABILITY

Meetings were conducted with MERS to address the growing unfunded liabilities to look at future options for pension plans with many of the collective bargaining agreements.

GOAL #5 DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Maintained an open relationship with MiWorks! and local colleges for position openings with the goal of attracting, interviewing, and selecting more diverse candidates. HR Director Marx joined the Executive Leadership Diversity Workgroup, a Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) Initiative that will provide professional networking opportunities and advice on attracting talent and developing a well-rounded diverse workforce strategy.

GOAL #6 FOCUS ON EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Both internal and external positive results in selection and interviewing, on-boarding new employees, providing quick responses to employees and candidates, and providing support to all departments on employment-related issues. A continued renewed relationship with all seven unions, with only four grievances for 2015, three of which were withdrawn and one settled.

Information Technology Department

2015 Summary Review

GOAL #4 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The project to improve survey procedures was initiated in November 2014 and is still under way at the time of this update. In June 2015, the ArcGIS Server software was updated to a version that will facilitate direct import of survey information into the Geographic Information System database. Preliminary work was conducted to review the related field survey software that will allow the collection and processing of the survey data for efficient import. Staff is waiting to select the specific field software until the GIS Specialist position has been filled and the incumbent is given the opportunity to work with our field crews to determine the best package(s) for the various Meridian Charter Township operations. The work to completely realize this goal will continue into future years.

Work started in December 2014 to realize the goal to obtain new aerial imagery. The project is expected to be completed in November 2015. The Tri-County flight was conducted in March, with orthography processing taking place through June. Quality control and corrections will continue up through the final delivery. Once delivered, the Township will have three inch pixel photography that covers the entire Township and surrounding areas.

The project to bring the Township payroll operation back in-house was initialized in November 2014 and completed in August 2015. Township databases were prepared in mid-March 2015, with massive data transfers taking place at the end of that month. The 'shell system' for payroll was completed by the end of April 2015. The vendor (BS&A) worked with the Township Accounting team to backfill all payroll data between April and July 2015. Township staff completed training in the use of the new software in mid-July, and the first payroll was processed on July 24. As of August, payroll is no longer being contracted out to a third party.

GOAL #8 COMMUNICATIONS

Citizen response is an ongoing activity that is always expected of and expertly performed by IT staff. This is planned to continue for the foreseeable future.

The project to enhance network based storage was initialized in December 2014 and successfully completed in mid-May 2015. Hardware was delivered ahead of schedule in March, and, in spite of some unanticipated challenges, the new appliance was successfully deployed in approximately one month. This is the first active network storage installed in a facility other than the Municipal Building. This marks a significant milestone on a multi-year project intended to enhance business continuity in the wake of the loss of one of our facilities.

This CAD Mobile software replacement project was initialized by Ingham County in mid-2014, and while there was continuous activity through June 2015, most of the work took place between March 1 and the actual server cut-over on April 14, 2015. While the conversion was not without problems, all Township vehicles were active on the new software in the early morning hours of April 14, and the activity was an overall success.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY IN 2015

Staffing challenges for Information Technology positions in 2015

Carrying over from 2014 and expanding in 2015, Meridian Township saw significant volatility in our Information Technology positions. In March our GIS Specialist transferred to a System Administrator position to fill what had been a one year vacancy. The individual chosen to fill the subsequently vacant GIS Specialist position ended up not working out as planned as was only in the position part-time from May through October. The incumbent in our System Administrator II position took advantage of a better opportunity after having started with Township in 2000. The resulting open System Administrator position is proving to be very difficult to fill with a qualified individual. Returning to full staffing continues to be an elusive and time consuming endeavor. Regardless, IT staff will persevere until the objective is met.

Parks & Recreation Department

2015 Summary Review

The value of the 2015 goals and objectives is the framework they provide for directing work and empowering staff to accomplish tasks. They also assist in choosing projects and partners to help achieve these ends.

GOAL #1 ENVIRONMENT

The presence of Chronic Wasting Disease in Meridian Township has created an unexpected partnership with the MDNR and USDA who brought sharpshooters into our community to help reduce and/or eradicate the disease and halt the spread throughout Michigan. A total of 700 deer were tested from June-September with three positive results. The new rules and regulations in our management zone have altered our established Deer Management Program. Our program has been implemented again this year starting in October with new protocols in place. It is anticipated that the number of deer taken under this revised program will be greatly reduced. The Deer Management Program will continue through December at which time the sharpshooters will return.

Kelsey Dillon was hired as Stewardship Coordinator to develop, implement, and manage stewardship projects in our land preserves and parks. She comes to us with a great deal of knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm!

GOAL #3 PARKS

Projects completed include:

- Nancy Moore Park pavilion/restroom building received new siding and rotted board replacement, additional safety fencing, and new foul poles on both ball fields.
- Parking lots were repaved or sealed at Harris Nature Center, Ferguson Park, Wonch Park, Newton Road Park, Brattin Woods Park, Ted Black Woods, and the Nancy Moore Park entry drive.
- The Central Park Master Plan was completed creating renovation and development plans for the Historical Village, Municipal Complex, Lederbuhr parcel, Central Park South and Nancy Moore Park. An alternative location for the Farmers' Market was identified at the Meridian Mall.
- The pavilion replacement project in Wonch Park is underway and should be completed yet this year.
- Planning for development of Towner Road Park is underway with the existing structures removed and plan revisions occurring for the front portion of the park.

GOAL #5 ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The "Celebrate Downtown Okemos" event will become "Celebrate Meridian" in 2016 in partnership with the Meridian Downtown Development Authority. Many of the same activities will remain in downtown Okemos, but other activities will be added throughout the Township. The event will occur on Saturday, June 11, 2016.

GOAL #6 DIVERSITY

Meridian Township worked in partnership with the Greater Lansing Chinese Association and 14 partners to produce the 2015 Chinese New Year Celebration at the Meridian Mall. Planning for the 2016 event is currently underway with a tentative date of February 6 or 7.

Nokomis Learning Center has struggled financially in recent years, but the Parks and Recreation Department continued to provide promotion of their programs and activities in the Family Fun Guide and on Facebook.

GOAL #7 RECREATION

All the objectives (a-j) under this goal have been achieved. Program details will be provided in the annual report.

Police Department 2015 Summary Review

GOAL #2 PUBLIC SAFETY

The Department continued to provide police services in excess of 80 hours each week to Williamstown Township.

The Department worked with HOMTV completing more than two dozen interviews for Beyond the Badge and other segments. Nixle, Facebook, MTPD Blog, and Twitter are among the social media sites the Department uses to regularly communicate with our citizens.

The Department fulfilled its requirements with the Office of Highway Safety Planning by participating in the traffic safety and youth alcohol grants.

An upgrade is in progress for camera improvements in the booking and the sally port areas. After a review of the State Police shared records management system and recommendation from cooperating agencies, the Department will participate beginning 2016. Ingham 911 dispatch transitioned to a new computer-aided dispatch software program. All necessary software changes were implemented with police department client software. Three new replacement patrol vehicles were placed into service. The Department hosted a citizen's academy with 16 participants and a youth academy with 17 attendees.

GOAL #4 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

In cooperation with Information Technology, the Department reviewed building and grounds surveillance camera systems. The Department is prepared to implement a system should it be funded.

GOAL #6 DIVERSITY

Among other appearances at job fairs, the Department recruited at the Wayne State University job fair sponsored by the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. The Department adopted Language Line as a resource to assist officers when communicating with others unable to speak English.

GOAL #8 COMMUNICATIONS

Citizen surveys are mailed regularly. Surveys returned indicate citizens are very satisfied with the response to their concerns by our officers.

GOAL #9 NEIGHBORHOODS

The Department scheduled regular neighborhood watch meetings with guest speakers of special interest to our community leaders. The meetings also provide an opportunity for leaders to voice concerns regarding crimes and quality of life issues in their neighborhoods. The Department celebrated National Night Out, visiting thirty neighborhoods.

Public Works & Engineering Department

2015 Summary Review

GOAL #1 ENVIRONMENT

As of October 30, 2015, PW&E issued, inspected, and enforced 271 soil erosion and sedimentation permits.

PW&E sewer division maintained approximately 150 miles of sewer main and 28 lift-stations.

Meridian Township sponsored two special recycling events for the community and continues to offer a recycling and yard waste collection center for the residents.

The Township continued to monitor energy use and strives to reduce waste as practical. A prime example is the installation of LED lighting in the Town Hall and Service Center parking lots. This project resulted in a significant drop in energy consumption without any negative illumination effects in regards to public safety.

GOAL #2 PUBLIC SAFETY

The new Central Fire Station is on target to be occupied and operational by February 1, 2016.

A new ambulance was purchased and placed into service during the summer of 2015.

Three new patrol vehicles were ordered, fully equipped, and placed into service in 2015.

GOAL #4 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

PW&E recently received the final radio RF propagation study and is reviewing its findings and recommendations. Because the existing equipment is at the end of its service life it is critical that we replace the SCADA communication system. Replacement of the system will occur in the next 12 to 18 months.

The first year of the SAW grant is almost complete. A significant portion of the Township sanitary sewer system has been cleaned and televised resulting in a significant amount of data. This information will be used to develop a long term asset management program for the Department and this critical infrastructure.

The new Towar lift station has been constructed and is in operation. Final site restoration is underway and will be complete by the end of the year.

Once the final decommissioning of the Towar lift station is complete, the existing control panel will be removed and upgraded and ultimately reused at the Woodhill lift station. The project is on target to be completed in the first quarter of 2016.

The Shoals lift station and the Sundance lift station received new pumps in the summer of 2015.

The new Okemos Road Pathway Bridge pedestrian bridge was installed and opened to the public in June 2015.

The new pathway on the south side of Haslett Road (Okemos to Bayonne) was completed and is now available for use by the residents and visitors of Meridian Township.

The new retaining wall at Glendale Cemetery on Mt. Hope Road has been replaced and is a significant aesthetic and functional upgrade for the Cemetery and adjacent pathway.

The pathway retaining wall at 2322 Mt. Hope Road was replaced in October 2015.

The preliminary design for the pathway on the south side of Mt. Hope Road (Okemos to Maumee) is complete but easement acquisition is preventing construction. PW&E will be pursuing the easements over the final months of 2015 and is programming actual construction in 2016.

The new roof at the Service Center was placed in the summer of 2015.

PW&E is surveying similar communities regarding leaf pickup programs and will use resulting information to determine feasibility of a program for Meridian Township.

The Department continues to close gaps on the pathway system as funding and/or development opportunities arise throughout the Township.

GOAL #8 COMMUNICATIONS

PW&E team members place a strong emphasis on responding to all citizen inquiries daily. Our operations and services impact everyone in the Township 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

GOAL #9 NEIGHBORHOODS

The Township completed 4.4 miles of neighborhood street work in 2015 in cooperation with the Ingham County Road Department.

PW&E replaced over 5,000 square feet of sidewalk as part of its repair program in 2015.

Team members worked to maintain and improve the water and sewer systems of the Township through responding to general information calls, meter reading, utility reviews, permitting, utility locating, service installations, repairs, maintenance, and new construction on a daily basis in 2015.

Township buildings and properties are inspected frequently throughout the year to ensure the necessary maintenance is occurring or is scheduled to be performed to extend the life cycle of the asset as long as practical.

2016 DRAFT Goals

1. Review, create, and implement a long-term plan to stabilize the Township's woefully underfunded pension funds.
2. Assist the Planning Commission and the Township Board with the creation and follow through on finalizing the 2010 Master Plan.
3. Develop a short-term plan to foster development in the Carriage Hills, Haslett, and Downtown Okemos business districts.
4. Through mutual respect, negotiate new employment contracts with all seven (7) bargaining groups.
5. Continue to seek opportunities to reduce overall operating costs similar to the 2015 Engineering/Public Works reorganization.

2016 Key Objectives

ACCOUNTING & BUDGETING DEPARTMENT

- Complete the Consolidated Annual Financial Report (CAFR) receiving an unmodified audit opinion and the Certificate of Achievement of Excellence in Financial Reporting.
- Maintain, per the Board's direction, a minimum fund balance in the General Fund of \$5,250,000.
- Work with the Planning, Engineering, and Police Departments to set up project tracking in BS&A to improve the tracking and monitoring process of bond and escrow monies.

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

- Defend assessment appeals made to the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

COMMUNICATIONS/HOMTV DEPARTMENT

- Implement a branding campaign for Meridian Township.
- Implement a more welcoming and accessible website.
- Provide fair, unbiased 2016 Election coverage.
- Conduct a Communications Needs Assessment in conjunction with a Student Group from Michigan State University.

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- Amend the Commercial Sign Ordinance.
- Adopt the 2012 edition of the Property Maintenance Code.
- Work with the City of East Lansing to develop a regional Code Officials organization to provide training and education for building inspectors.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Implement a Township-wide Safety Committee to work with employees to provide a safer work environment through safety awareness and productive training initiatives.
- Continue to review health care programs and costs in an effort to ensure compliance with PA 152.
- Provide Township-wide employment training programs that support the objectives in the updated Personnel Policy Manual.
- Create a strategy that focuses on diversity initiatives for successful recruitment and retention of a well-rounded workforce.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

- Replace and enhance the Township's telephone system.

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

- Update the 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Begin construction of Towner Road Park.
- Implement environmental stewardship activities in parks and land preserves.
- Provide special events that celebrate our community and cultural diversity.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Implement the Language First Program.
- Negotiate a new police contract with Williamstown Township.
- Continue our efforts to diversify the Police and Fire Departments.
- In participation with the Michigan State Police, implement a new police records management system.
- Complete construction of the new Central Fire Station.
- Complete Blue Card Command Training.

PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

- Complete the 2016 Local Roads Program.
- Provide annual maintenance and repair to Township facilities and equipment.
- Work with the City of East Lansing on major upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant.

