



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD – SPECIAL MEETING
December 18, 2020 12:00pm

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS
3. ROLL CALL
4. PRESENTATION
5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS
6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
7. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - A. Township's Ongoing COVID-19 Response
 - B. Meridian Township Small Business Relief Fund
8. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
9. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS
10. ADJOURNMENT

All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained from the Supervisor.
Appointment of Supervisor Pro Tem and/ or Temporary Clerk if necessary.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Board by contacting:
Township Manager Frank L. Walsh, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4258 - Ten Day Notice is Required.
Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Township Hall



To: Board Members

**From: Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager
Amber Clark, Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director**

Date: December 16, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Small Business Relief Fund

As the saying goes, “it’s important to save for a rainy day”. I’m sure we can all agree for our local business community, it’s pouring out.

Several months ago, the Board took the courageous step to offer a \$150,000 Small Business Grant Program. The program was widely popular. Through a two-tier vetting process, the Township awarded 37, \$4,000 grants. Here we are six months later and the clouds are darker and the need is greater. We believe that Round II of the Small Business Relief Program is a necessity. Time is of the essence.

On December 31, 2020, we expect our fund balance in the general fund to be \$8,400,000. Please note that \$700,000 of the \$8,400,000 is set aside for the Meridian Redevelopment Fund (MRF). The MRF was developed in 2017 to stimulate redevelopment in our two PICA areas and was created with the \$570,000 proceeds from the 2015 sale of the MARC building. It is our belief that COVID has impacted our Meridian business community to the point that the Board should reconsider the purpose of the MRF. While we greatly anticipate redevelopment in the Village of Okemos and Downtown Haslett, we have immediate needs that sprawl throughout the community. We are recommending that we dip into the MRF and act without delay to create Round II.

It is our recommendation that the Board immediately authorize the use of \$500,000 from the MRF to fund Round II of the Meridian Township Small Business Grant Relief Program (MTSBGP). We want to be clear, we are not abandoning the MRF. This is simply a timely redirection of the funds until such a time as we can replenish the initial corpus of \$700,000. There are several ideas we have in mind to reestablish the MRF. However, for the sake of moving forward, we will focus on the immediate need of our local business community. It is important to note, the worst case scenario is a December 31, 2021 fund balance of \$7,200,000 which is 35% of our general fund budget. Financial experts and auditors claim that 20%-25% is a strong financial position.

If authorized by the Board, the program will mirror Round I. That is, we will publish the grant program application and allow two weeks for the business community to respond. Following the application period, the six member committee (Supervisor Styka, Trustee Jackson, EDC Chair Sims, DDA Chair Fulk, Director Clark and I) will vet the submissions. The EDC Board will review our work and provide final oversight of the MTSBGP. The individual grant allotment will cap at \$7,000. If the Board moves forward in an “emergency manner” on Friday, we believe we can award grants in 4-5 weeks. We are ready to move forward with the grant application release on Monday, December 21.



While there will be many other aspects of our Friday COVID update, the MTSBGP is paramount. We look forward to your discussion.

Motion for Township Board's Consideration:

MOVE TO AUTHORIZE USE OF \$500,000 OF THE MERIDIAN REDEVELOPMENT FUND TO FUND ROUND II OF THE MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF PROGRAM AND RELEASE THE GRANT APPLICATION ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020.

Attachment:

1. Meridian Township Small Business Relief Fund Application

The Meridian Township Board unanimously approved the Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to provide economic support to Meridian Township's small business community to assist business operations that have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 crisis. Through its Small Business Relief Grant Program, the Meridian Township board is providing grant opportunities to small businesses affected by the virus. The Meridian Township Small Business Relief Grant Program (MTSBP) is formally established to assist our small business owners with the negative impacts related to COVID-19.

The total grant allocation \$500,000 for about 70 businesses to receive **up to \$7,000** in funding. Grant award quantities will be determined on a case by case basis by the review of the Meridian Economic Development Corporation subcommittee. Applications will be available online and must be submitted via email to clark@meridian.mi.us. The application period begins on Monday, December 21, 2020 and ends at 12:00 pm on Tuesday, January 5, 2021. Grants are anticipated to be awarded on January 8, 2021, with funds distributed by January 15, 2021.

BUSINESS ELIGIBILITY:

All businesses seeking funds must meet **all** the following requirements:

1. The business is in the jurisdictional boundaries of Meridian Township.
2. The business has 50 employees or less, both full-time and part-time (inclusive of owners).
3. The business is not delinquent on any accounts, fees, taxes, or assessments owed to Meridian Township.
4. The business has a physical (brick-and-mortar) location.

ABOUT THIS GRANT

The State of Michigan through the Michigan Department of Health and Human services enacted an Executive Directive to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Michigan. The directive remains in effect to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and support the overall public health. The result of this is a negative impact to Meridian Township small businesses: The Meridian Township (MTSBGP) Small Business Relief Grant Program is meant to assist businesses who have experienced financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic and or subsequent Executive Orders.

ELIGIBILITY

To be considered for the Meridian Township's Small Business Grant Relief Program, your business must meet the eligibility requirements listed below.

APPLICATION PERIOD

The application will be open until 5:00 pm on Monday, December 21, 2020. The application will close on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 by 12:00p. Completed applications must be submitted via email to clark@meridian.mi.us

PLEASE REVIEW BUSINESS ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION CRITERIA BEFORE STARTING THE APPLICATION. All documents are available on the Meridian Township website via, [Meridian Township Economic Development Department](#).

Before you begin the grant application, you will be asked to acknowledge and agree to the eligibility conditions of the grant. If awarded, applicant acknowledges and agrees to the following:

1. That all questions in this application have been answered truthfully.
2. That information provided in this application is public knowledge, in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.
3. If awarded, applicant shall provide to the Meridian Township Grant Application Subcommittee a W-9 completed and signed within 24 hours of award notification.
4. If awarded, that the business may be identified to the public in press releases and understands that application materials and any other items submitted may be subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions of the award as described above. Type your first and last name as acknowledgement. Upon your acknowledgement, you may proceed to the grant application questions.



SMALL BUSINESS GRANT RELIEF APPLICATION

1. Name of Business:
2. Business address street and number:
3. Is your establishment a brick-and-mortar business located within Meridian Township?
4. Is your business delinquent on any accounts, fees and taxes or assessments owed to Meridian Township?

5. Contact Information:

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

6. Are you the owner of the business? If not please provide the owner of the business's contact information:

First Name - Business Owner(s):

Last Name - Business Owner(s):

Phone Number - Business Owner(s):

Email Address-Business Owner(s):

7. Type of Business. Please choose the best fit from the following options (mark only one)if other fill in the blank:

Construction / development

Child care / family services

Restaurant / dining

Retail

Fitness / gyms

Health care

Housing / hospitality

Business services

Manufacturer

Non-profit

Wholesaler / distributor

Personal care / grooming

Educational services

Sole proprietor

Other: _____

8. How long has this business existed in Meridian Township?
9. Describe briefly the history of this business as it relates to Meridian Township?
10. Number of employees on December 21, 2020?
11. Number of expected employees in January 31, 2021?
12. If awarded how much in funding are you requesting? _____
(Please note awardees will receive **up to \$7,000** in funding)

1. HOW DID THIS SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM COME ABOUT?

The Meridian Township Board called a special meeting Friday, December 18, 2020 to discuss the current status of the community related to COVID-19. The Township board approved the Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to provide economic support to Meridian Township's small business community to assist business operations that have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 crisis. The Township Board elected to approve the allocation of \$ 500,000 from its discretionary funds to business relief initiatives on Friday December 18, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Township Board in collaboration with the Meridian EDC subcommittee intends to provide working capital grants to help alleviate the economic distress placed upon the Township's small businesses.

2. WHAT AMOUNT OF FUNDS WERE REALLOCATED FOR THIS GRANT PROGRAM?

\$500,000

3. WHAT AMOUNT IS AVAILABLE FOR INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS?

Grants of up to \$7,000 will be made to awardees.

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY DETERMINANTS OF ELIGIBILITY?

To be eligible, applicants must be a local, small, physical (brick-and-mortar) business within Meridian Township. Applicant businesses cannot be delinquent on any accounts, fees, taxes or assessments owed to Meridian Township.

Additional business eligibility requirements can be found in the Meridian EDC's Grant Overview.

5. ARE SOLE PROPRIETORS OR HOME-BASED BUSINESSES ELIGIBLE?

Sole proprietors are eligible, adhering to the same eligibility determination requirements noted in the application and the Meridian EDC's Grant Overview. However, home-based businesses are ineligible.

6. ARE NONPROFITS ELIGIBLE BUSINESSES?

Yes, nonprofits are eligible if they meet all eligibility requirements. Nonprofits still need to answer all business-oriented questions and will be reviewed on the same criteria as for-profit businesses.

7. IF MY BUSINESS HAS MULTIPLE LOCATIONS, DO I NEED TO SUBMIT A SEPARATE APPLICATION FOR EACH?

Yes, every business location requires its own application. The applicant must use company-wide metrics during the process (i.e. total number of employees, financial data, etc.) for eligibility determination and review purposes.

The applicant must specify in the application when prompted which brick-and-mortar business location the requested grant funds will be exclusively deployed.

8. IS MY FRANCHISE-OWNED BUSINESS ELIGIBLE?

Yes, franchises or businesses affiliated with a national chain are eligible.

9. WILL I NEED TO SUBMIT FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS AS PART OF THE APPLICATION?

No, the Meridian EDC is not requiring the applicant to submit financial documents. The applicant must acknowledge and agree to answer all questions truthfully to be eligible for grant funds.

10. WILL THERE BE A DEFINED APPLICATION PERIOD?

Yes, the grant application period for this program will be open Monday, December 21, 2020, through 12:00 pm on Tuesday, January 5, 2021.

11. WHERE WOULD AN INTERESTED SMALL BUSINESS OWNER GO TO APPLY?

The application will be available on the Meridian EDC's page of the Meridian Township website, meridian.mi.us. Completed applications must be submitted via email to Clark@meridian.mi.us. If a business owner is unable to complete the application form for any reason, they are encouraged to contact Meridian Township's Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark for assistance at 517.853.4568, or email Clark@meridian.mi.us.

12. HOW EXTENSIVE WILL THE APPLICATION BE?

The purpose of this grant program is to quickly provide financial relief to businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic or related Executive Orders here in Meridian Township. We expect the application will take a typical respondent around 10-15 minutes to complete, with most of the requested information expected to be readily known or accessible to most business owners.

13. WHO CAN I TALK TO ABOUT QUESTIONS, CLARIFICATIONS AND SCORING CRITERIA ON THE APPLICATION?

Applicants are encouraged to review the Meridian EDC's Grant Overview, Scoring Criteria and this FAQ document. Applicants can also consult with Township Staff by calling 517.853.4568 during normal business hours or by sending an email to clark@meridian.mi.us.

14. WHEN WILL APPLICATIONS BE DUE?

Applications will be due by 12:00 pm on Tuesday, January 5, 2021.

15. HOW WILL ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST BE ADDRESSED IN THE CONSIDERATION OF GRANT APPLICANTS?

The review committee will acknowledge all actual or perceived conflicts of interest and will not be scoring any business for which a conflict could exist.

16. BOARD MEMBERS OF THE MERIDIAN EDC MAY OWN ELIGIBLE BUSINESSES. HOW ARE YOU REMOVING FAVORITISM AND SELECTION BIAS FROM THE GRANT APPLICANT SELECTION PROCESS?

Meridian EDC members are ineligible to apply for or receive grants under this program.

17. WHEN WILL SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT BUSINESSES BE NOTIFIED AND WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM THEM TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDS?

We intend to inform successful applicant businesses on Friday, January 8, 2021. Awarded business will need to submit an executed W-9 form, along with a simple grant contract agreement that speaks to fund use and reporting requirements.

18. WHEN WILL GRANT FUNDS BE RECEIVED BY SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT BUSINESSES?

It is our goal to have all funds delivered to grant recipients by close of Township business on January 15, 2021.

Grants will be awarded to businesses that meet the eligibility requirements. The below are the details of how the application review committee will evaluate your request for funding.

COMMUNITY IMPACT/HISTORY IN MERIDIAN:

Small businesses are integral to the economy in a myriad of ways, such as how they engage with the community through philanthropy, events, programming and more. Does your business have a long history in Meridian Township? Does the business engage with local organizations or Township events? Does the business engage with community organizations like Rotary or Lions Club? Is the business beloved by its community with a proven track record? How does the community relate to the business's brand? Does the business have partnerships with other local businesses or organizations that would be affected by the business closing or declaring bankruptcy? These are elements the review committee will take into consideration.

UNIQUENESS OF PRODUCT/SERVICE/OFFERING:

Many communities have businesses that uniquely contribute to the community and are likely difficult to replace, impacting the community's character. Is the business the Township's only specialty restaurant or grocery store? What differentiates this business from others and its competitors?

OWNERSHIP RESIDENCY:

Does most of the ownership of the business live in Meridian Township? This is not a requirement of the grant application and will not negate your ability to be eligible for funding.

REVIEW PROCESS:

COMMITTEE

A five-person application review committee consisting of the Chair of the Meridian EDC, a member of the Meridian Township Board of Trustees, the Chair of the Meridian Township Downtown Development Authority, the Township Manager and the Township Economic Development Director, will be responsible for application review and scoring.

The committee will review, consider and score all submitted applications. The committee will also make a funding amount determination on a case by case basis. Grants will be awarded up to \$7,000 in funding assistance. The Meridian EDC will meet on January 6, 2021 to approve grant awardees.

NEXT STEPS FOR AWARDED BUSINESSES

Awarded businesses will be required to submit a W-9 form within 24 hours of grant award acknowledgement to expedite fund processing.

Awarded businesses will also be required to sign a simple grant agreement that specifies six months of simple reporting requirements and eligible use of funds.