

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD -**APPROVED**-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
Tuesday, October 15, 2024, 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis,
Trustee Wilson, Trustee Trezise and Trustee Sundland

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Interim Manager Schmitt, Director Gebes, Director Tithof, Chief Grillo, Director Tithof,
and Fire Marshal Millerov

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Hendrickson called the October 15, 2024, Regular Township Board meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Hendrickson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board. Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Sundland and Trustee Trezise present at 6:00 pm.

4. PRESENTATION

NONE

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

NONE

6. INTERIM TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Interim Manager Schmitt gave updates about the following:

- We have received the building permit for demolition and construction of the former Bank of America building near Trader Joe's. It will be a coffee shop with a drive thru.
- All the local road work is wrapping up for the year.
- All emergency sirens have been installed and we now have full coverage in the Township.
- DEI training for Staff is taking place. The first round occurred today.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine stated that today he attended the second meeting of the Ingham County Materials Management Committee and was elected Chair. This committee will update Ingham

County communities' recycling center plans over the next three years. He is attending the Level 1 Assessor training this week.

Trustee Wilson reported she attended the Community Resources Commission last week. They are working on holiday baskets for low income residents.

Clerk Guthrie stated we have received nearly 41% of the absentee ballots that were issued. There are four drop boxes for absentee ballots including the Haslett and Okemos Libraries, Municipal Building outside and inside. Reminder to sign up at Michigan.gov/vote if you wish to receive e-notifications regarding your ballot.

Trustee Trezise mentioned he attended the Heritage Festival last weekend.

Supervisor Hendrickson remarked that on Sunday, October 6th he attended the Fire Prevention Open House. Thanks to the Fire Department for the event. Attended the Downtown Development Authority on October 7th and there was not quorum for the meeting.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Wilson moved to approve the Agenda. Supported by Trustee Trezise.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Trezise, and Trustee Sundland

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Hendrickson listed the items on the agenda.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Supported by Trustee Sundland.

Trustee Wilson inquired if Okemos Schools is sharing the cost for the change in Consumers Energy lighting on item 9E. Interim Manager Schmitt will follow up on the question.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Trezise, and Trustee Sundland

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY

NONE

11. HEARINGS

NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Township Manager National Search Process-Set a Date for Candidate Interviews & Reception

Supervisor Hendrickson proposed setting a date of Tuesday, December 3rd starting at 1:30pm to schedule public interviews for the final candidates and at 5:00pm on that day, schedule a public reception/meet and greet with the candidates. The application deadline is October 30th. A closed session will be held on November 26th to determine the finalists for the December 3rd interviews.

Trustee Trezise moved to suspend the rules to set a date for interviews of the Township Manager. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Trezise, and Trustee Sundland

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

Trustee Trezise moved to set a date of Tuesday, December 3, 2024 starting at 1:30 pm to schedule public interviews for the final Township Manager candidates and a public reception for the candidates from 5:00 pm-6:00 pm. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.

Clerk Guthrie questioned what the Board would do if there are no candidates. Supervisor Hendrickson mentioned the Board does meet on November 12th and in that event may choose to extend the deadline for applications.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Trezise, and Trustee Sundland

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Special Use Permit #24-18 - Okemos Gateway LLC – 1614 West Grand River Avenue

Interim Manager Schmitt described this as a recreational marijuana facility. The property is currently vacant and is 2.4 acres. It is located just to the east of Central Park Drive on the north side of Grand River Avenue. It is zoned C-2 and is in the marijuana business overlay district. This applicant did receive their medical marijuana license, but did not start construction due to COVID-19 pandemic. The Board did approve this applicant for a recreational marijuana license. The Planning Commission did hold the public hearing in

September with no comments and did vote unanimously for approval at their September 29, 2024 Planning Commission meeting.

Trustee McCurtis asked for clarification that this will be a recreational facility. Interim Manager Schmitt said yes the plans are for recreational marijuana.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if another applicant could apply for medical marijuana in this zone. Interim Manager Schmitt stated this applicant has both the medical and recreational licenses. If in the future, they gave up their medical license, the Board would need to open a window to accept applications for that license. Treasurer Deschaine asked how long the applicant has to act on this project. Interim Manager Schmitt said they have a maximum of two years to commence operations. Discussion regarding the possible cost of construction being in the \$2-\$3 million range.

Supervisor Hendrickson inquired regarding the 53 parking spaces mentioned in the Special Use Permit (SUP), but on the site diagram it only shows 20 spaces. Interim Manager Schmitt stated it should be 20 parking spaces and he will have them update the SUP.

Trustee Wilson questioned the number of parcels on the property. Interim Manager Schmitt responded there are three parcels owned by the applicant, but the parcel to be developed is 2.4 acres.

Clerk Guthrie asked if there is an existing structure on the property. Interim Manager Schmitt confirmed there is currently a home on the property. Discussion that the application needs to be updated.

Trustee McCurtis mentioned the application seems as if it was rushed and it has a lot of grammatical and mathematical errors.

Treasurer Deschaine suggested the item be on the next Board agenda for discussion again with the updated application and action the following meeting.

Clerk Guthrie stated the number of employees/shifts worked and hours of operation in the application is incomplete and needs to be updated.

Trustee Wilson asked if there are any plans for outside sales or curbside and there has not been that request. Discussion regarding the applicant having no odors outside of the building.

Supervisor Hendrickson states part one of the application could use some retooling regarding the deficiencies discussed. The Board agreed to bring the item back to the November 12, 2024 for discussion again. Interim Manager Schmitt will have the applicant update the application.

B. PA 152 Health Care Costs

Interim Manager Schmitt gave background information on PA 152 relating to the Township's health care costs. For several years, the Township has been under the hard cap and the Board has reallocated funds to the employees' health savings accounts (HSA). Employees, over the last eight years, have received approximately \$2,080 per family for their health savings account. This year the Township is over the hard cap. The Township now needs to consider opting out of PA 152 for \$134,000 and whether or not the Board

wishes to direct Staff to develop a funding mechanism for the HSAs. Not opting out means the gap in funding would be passed along to the employees.

Director Tithof explained Gallagher Health Benefits reviewed our health insurance as they do each year and discovered we were over the hard cap. The breakdown of the employee costs per pay period that would be passed along to the employee would be the following: single \$16.60, double \$39.85 and family \$49.81. There is a possibility that we could fall under the hard cap next year, as the calculation is done annually

Kathy Burns from Gallagher Health Benefits explained that PA 152 is a State law that has been in place since 2012. She discussed that each year it needs to be Board discussion weather the Township chooses to opt out of PA 152 or go to an 80/20 plan.

Discussion about why the State increase was only 0.2% for this year. DJ MacAloon from Gallagher stated that this is the lowest increase since its inception and this comes following the highest increase of 4.1% last year.

Treasurer Deschaine recused himself from the conversation because he is personally impacted by both items.

Supervisor Hendrickson asked how much we have been under the hard cap in the last few years. He asked how much we have contributed to the HSAs in the past five years and what the Township costs are for single, double and family premiums for 2025. Ms. Burns from Gallagher will follow up on that tomorrow.

Director Tithof recommended that the Board consider opting out of PA 152 and fund the employees' health insurance costs at the next meeting. The Board is in agreement. There was discussion about revisiting the HSA contribution.

Supervisor Hendrickson mentioned in the future if we are consistently over the hard cap, we might want to discuss the options with the Unions of contributing a fixed amount to the HSAs if employees are paying a portion of the health care premiums.

C. Memorandum of Understanding with Ingham County for Fire Emergency Boat Launch

Fire Marshal Millerov stated the Township would like to relocate its rescue boat to Lake Lansing South Park during Parks season (April-October). If there is a water emergency, chances are it would be at Lake Lansing.

Trustee Trezise mentioned it is a no cost agreement and a benefit for the safety of our community. He sees no issue with this agreement.

Supervisor Hendrickson agrees that he sees no issue with the agreement as presented and suggests it be brought back at the next Board meeting under consent on the agenda.

D. Opioid Settlement Funds

Chief Grillo presented an overview of the opioid settlement funds that came from class action lawsuits from large pharmaceutical distributors. To date Meridian Township has received \$70,000. We will receive \$258,000 over 15 years. The funds can be used for treatment, equipment and education related to opioid use. Chief described equipment uses of the funds could include TruNarc, a handheld narcotic identifier, GovApp to communicate with the public, AEDs, DARE, and outreach/tents for education.

Trustee Wilson asked about the Department's priorities. Chief mentioned the handheld narcotic identifier and the GovApp would be the top priorities.

Trustee Trezise asked about the fees for the GovApp. Chief stated the app is free to download and the public would opt in to whatever notifications they wish to receive. The Communications Department is in favor of the app. It would be \$20,000 to purchase the app and \$5,000 annually to maintain.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Josh Nahum, Township resident, showed his support for the completion of Phase 1 and 2 of the MSU to Lake Lansing pathway. He requested signage to show the entrance and exits of the pathway.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Supervisor Hendrickson mentioned he agrees with Mr. Nahum's comment and has reached out to our Staff in the Parks and Public Works Departments on the issue.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Wilson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee McCurtis.

VOICE VOTE

YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Trezise, and Trustee Sundland

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.



Scott Hendrickson
Township Supervisor



Deborah Guthrie
Township Clerk