

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2012 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Dreyfus,
LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards, Director of Community Planning & Development
Mark Kieselbach, Director of Engineering & Public Works Ray Severy, Fire Chief Fred
Cowper, Director of Finance Diana Hasse

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor McGillicuddy called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor McGillicuddy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, thanked Supervisor McGillicuddy for her twenty years of service to Meridian Township. He spoke in continued opposition to MUPUD #12014 (Capstone).

Gabriel Hausbeck, 4800 Nausau, Okemos, expressed his opposition to Special Use Permit #12021 (Trilogy).

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, noted LINC meetings are held at 6:45 P.M. on the third Thursdays of each month in the Community Room of the Haslett Library. He expressed several concerns relative to MUPUD #12014 (Capstone), focusing primarily on greenspace.

Vance Kincaid, 4530 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, spoke to his belief that Meridian Township has failed to justify building a new central fire station to taxpayers and highlighted several concerns on this issue. He urged residents to vote no on the central fire station ballot proposal in its current form.

Supervisor McGillicuddy closed Public Remarks.

5. REPORTS/BOARD COMMENT/NEW WORRIES

Trustee Dreyfus attended the last meeting of the Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC), where both the Douglas J Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MUPUD) concept plan and the lease of the Meridian Activity Center (MAC) by the Meridian Area Business Association (MABA) were discussed and given votes of approval.

Trustee Veenstra reported the major logjam on the Red Cedar River has been removed by the Ingham County Drain Commissioner resulting in a water table reduction of approximately one (1) foot. He addressed his belief there is a misleading statement contained in a *Meridian Monitor* article regarding the rezoning proposal on the ballot and urged voters to cast a "yes" vote.

Clerk Helmbrecht clarified the Board does not take a position on any ballot issue. She announced citizens can receive an absentee ballot up until 4:00 P.M. Monday, August 6th for the Primary Election. Clerk Helmbrecht reminded voters if they come to the Clerk’s office on August 6th for a ballot, it cannot be taken out of the Meridian Municipal Building. She noted voters may request an absentee ballot be mailed until Saturday, August 4th at 2:00 P.M. She reminded voters that on a primary ballot, votes can only be cast for one party.

Trustee Ochberg expressed appreciation for the first logjam removal, but believed the main cause of the lower water table is the drought.

Supervisor McGillicuddy reported her attendance at the last Downtown Development Authority (DDA) meeting, where the Douglas J. concept plan was presented. She indicated her attendance at the press release event to kick off Comerica Bank’s commitment to the Meridian EDC for small business loans to local entrepreneurs.

Trustee Dreyfus clarified comments in a letter contained in the Board packet by indicating the Board never prevented Horrocks from locating a store in Meridian Township.

Director Kieselbach added staff did not have any contact with Horrocks in their search for a site in Meridian Township.

Treasurer Brixie reported her participation last year, along with Trustee LeGoff and others, in Haslett Village Square being used as an urban design study undertaken by a Michigan State University class. It was suggested during the study that Horrocks move into the Village Square. She indicated there are other suitable sites and urged Horrocks to come to the Township.

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the revised agenda as submitted. Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor McGillicuddy reviewed the consent agenda.

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie

NAYS: Trustee Ochberg

Motion carried 6-1.

The adopted Consent Agenda items are as follows:

A. Communications

(1) Board Information (BI)

BI-1 Janice Beals, PO Box 174, Haslett; RE: Horrocks location in Meridian Township

(2) Commission Linkage (CL)

CL-1 Eckhart Dersch, 2203 Butternut Drive, Okemos; RE: Viable Dog Park Alternative

(3) Regional Linkage (RL)

RL-1 Harmony Gmazel, Land Use Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, 3135 Pine Tree Road, Suite 2C, Lansing; RE: Comments from the Tri-County Urban and Rural Service Management (URSM) Committee on the Township’s Proposed Master Plan Amendment

(4) On File in the Clerk’s Office (OF)

OF-1 Bill McConnell, 4376 Manitou, Okemos; RE: Capstone Project

Material received at the July 3, 2012 Board Meeting

Richard W. Pennings, Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis & Gotting, 124 W. Allegan Street, Suite 700, Lansing; RE: Request to postpone Grange Acres Request for PILOT until the July 17, 2012 Board Meeting

Rebecca Reagan, 2025 Lac Du Mont, Haslett; RE: Continued building and development in Meridian Township

Gladys Meyers, 5415 Lampen Drive, East Lansing, RE: Opposition to Phase 2 of the Lodges of East Lansing

Susan Davis, 4772 Arapaho Trail, Okemos; RE: Opposition to rescission of the vote denying SUP #12011 (Capstone)

Trustee Lynn Ochberg, 4383 Maumee, Okemos; RE: Notice of intent to rescind the vote to approve MUPUD #12014 (Capstone)

Vance L. Kincaid, 4530 Nakoma Drive, Okemos; RE: North-Central Fire Station

Will Tyler White, 2138 Hamilton Road, Okemos; RE: Concerns regarding the Douglas J Concept Plan

Treasurer Brixie 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 Helmbrecht.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie
 NAYS: Trustee Ochberg
 Motion carried 6-1.

B. Minutes

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the July 3, 2012 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie
 NAYS: Trustee Ochberg
 Motion carried 6-1.

C. Bills

Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows:

Common Cash	\$ 259,876.05
Public Works	\$ 207,350.50
Total Checks	\$ 467,226.55
Credit Card Transactions	\$ 6,871.77
Total Purchases	<u>\$ 474,098.32</u>
ACH Payments	<u>\$ 664,914.75</u>

Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie
 NAYS: Trustee Ochberg
 Motion carried 6-1.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

D. Resignations and Appointments to:

1) Land Preservation Advisory Board

Treasurer Brixie moved to accept the resignation of Ken Sink and appoint Robert Rusch to the Land Preservation Advisory Board for the remainder of the term ending December 31, 2015. Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor
 McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie
 NAYS: Trustee Ochberg
 Motion carried 6-1.

2) Environmental Commission

Treasurer Brixie moved to accept the resignation of Sarah R. Finley and appoint Jeralyn L. Moran to the Environmental Commission for the remainder of the term ending December 31, 2013. Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor
 McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie
 NAYS: Trustee Ochberg
 Motion carried 6-1.

E. Expanded Use of the Meridian Activity Center (MAC)

Township Manager Richards summarized the expanded use of the MAC as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 13, 2012.

Board member and staff discussion:

- Lease is for one year with a potential for renewal
- Framework of the lease is patterned after the agreement with Haslett Schools and the Capital Area District Library
- Sale of the building would result in the need for the Meridian Area Business Association (MABA) to find an alternate location
- Location of the building on a main street would allow entrepreneurs and businesses easy access with adequate parking
- Building is located in the central business district
- Lease is non-exclusive with the Township having first right of use
- Inquiry if this lease was offered to other potential occupants
- MABA was a creation of the Meridian EDC
- Intent of MABA to occupy only one side of the building
- Concern the Township is giving up money by allowing this lease arrangement

Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Supervisor, Clerk and Manager be authorized to execute and administer the Meridian Activity Center lease with the Meridian Area Business Association for the non-exclusive use of the first floor. Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy,
 Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie
 NAYS: Trustee Ochberg
 Motion carried 6-1.

8. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

9. HEARINGS (None)

10. ACTIONS ITEMS/ENDS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened and closed Public Remarks.

A. Kinawa View and Branches Drain Improvements At-Large Assessment

Township Manager Richards summarized the at-large assessment as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 17, 2012.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Concern with the Township's at-large assessment of 30%
- Significant engineering costs (47% of the construction cost)
- \$166,000 has already been spent on the project
- Approximately \$25,000 or more will need to be added to the Township's county drain assessment
- Since 2001, the Township's cost for drain assessments out of the general fund monies has increased from \$32,000 to \$504,000
- Township has a ten-day window to file an objection
- Concern with 90% of the engineering costs spent up front prior to approval
- Possibility of the Township looking at a dedicated millage for drains in the future
- Engineering became aware of the notice when it was included in the bid document

Trustee Ochberg moved to authorize Township officials to file an objection to the at-large assessment for the Kinawa View and Branches Drain Improvements Project. Seconded by Supervisor McGillicuddy.

Continued Board discussion:

- Concern with retribution for filing an objection
- Township pays a portion for maintenance of every drain within its borders
- Consequence of passing this motion would be an increase of costs to residents and residents in the drainage district would pay a larger share
- Residents would also pay legal fees on both sides of the case if the Township files an objection
- Historical payment for at-large assessments are within the 30% range
- Large Township expenditure for drains is primarily due to the Towar Rain Gardens project
- If the Township's objection is successful, the ICDC has discretion where to reapportion the difference
- Proportion of engineering costs v. construction costs
- Uncertainty whether the IDCD lets out bids for the engineering on a drain project
- Legal fees already incorporated into the cost of the project
- School and county health facility will benefit from this project without paying an assessment
- Economy is not conducive to support this large of a project

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, Ochberg, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk
Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie
NAYS: Trustees LeGoff, Veenstra
Motion carried 5-2.

11. DISCUSSION ITEMS/ENDS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke in support of the complete streets ordinance.

John Scott-Craig, 5244 Wardcliff Drive, East Lansing, and member of the Complete Streets Steering Committee, offered background information in support of the complete streets ordinance.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Okemos, requested the Board not use the fact that Meridian Township has lower water and sewer rates than neighboring communities as rationale for increasing rates. He believed the budgeting process to be the correct place to address this issue.

Vance Kincaid, 4530 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, believed regionalism has become an economic reality. He urged the Board to exercise financial sense and implement sound planning for the future. Mr. Kincaid believed it disingenuous to place a new central fire station as a proposal on the November 6th General ballot at this point in time.

Janine Sino, 3881 Pine Knoll, Okemos, spoke in support of the complete streets ordinance.

Supervisor McGillicuddy closed Public Remarks.

A. Grange Acres, Request for PILOT

Director Kieselbach summarized the request from Grange Acres for payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 12, 2012.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Phase 1 was built with federal aid monies

Rick Pennings, Loomis Law Firm, 124 W. Allegan St., Suite 700, Lansing, noted all phases were built in the late 1960s/early 1970s with federal assistance, but Phases 1, 3 and 4 were built under the Section 202 Program, a federal capital grant program which allowed for Section 8 subsidies. He added the second phase was built with federal insurance and Section 8 subsidies when the Section 202 program was not available.

Continued Board and applicant's representative discussion:

- Under state law, the Section 202 program provides for state reimbursement of the tax revenue that would otherwise be lost
- Under the PILOT program, the local municipality receives lower tax revenues based on a percentage of rents
- Applicant is in the process of refinancing all four (4) phases
- Request for Phase 2 does not comply with the Township's ordinance as written
- Confusion surrounding whether the Township needs to amend its ordinance to allow for this exemption
- If PILOT is approved, the state will pay approximately one-quarter of the taxes which would otherwise be received
- State had difficulty extending monies to some communities in the PILOT program
- No other existing housing project for low or moderate income seniors would currently qualify for this program
- A change in the ordinance would open this type of financing up to other low or moderate income housing communities
- Marsh Pointe and Stratford Place currently do not pay property taxes, but the Township receives a PILOT from the State of Michigan
- Marsh Pointe was the first housing project to qualify for this exemption
- Grange Acres places a high demand on Township EMS services
- Grange Acres is requesting an ordinance amendment
- If the PILOT is not granted, the applicant would have \$800,000 less to renovate and upgrade the living environment for units in Phase 2
- Possibility of drafting an ordinance which would be narrow in its effect
- Possibility of adding a municipal services agreement in addition to the PILOT structured to reimburse the Township for police, fire and emergency services

It was the consensus of the Board not to grant the request for a PILOT.

B. Complete Streets Ordinance

Harmony Gmazel, Land Use Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), 3135 Pine Tree Road, Suite 2C, Lansing, provided an overview of the complete streets concept and proposed ordinance language.

Board members, staff and the TCRPC representative discussed the following:

- Involvement of the Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads (ICDTR) when roads are resurfaced once this ordinance is adopted relative to bike lane striping
- Intent of the ordinance to look at all of the options prior to repaving
- What happens to projects not shown on the Master Plan
- Need to look at all modes of transportation when a road project is undertaken

- Delhi Township, Lansing Township and the cities of Lansing and East Lansing have adopted a complete streets ordinance
- Ordinance language is sufficient in addressing the need for dialogue between the county and the township
- ICDTR Managing Director Bill Conklin's willingness to work with the Township
- Concern with the ability to evaluate the phrases "adverse impacts" and "impact on safe travel"
- Language allows for public engagement and flexibility to develop benchmarks and measurements
- Request for Township attorney review of the ordinance language
- More flexibility in interpretation when ordinance is adopted brings less assurance when a complete streets project comes before the Board
- Suggestion for the attorney to place a timetable for Step 2 in developing standards
- Concern with linking roundabouts and road diets into the complete streets concept
- Not every improvement is appropriate for every road
- Prioritizing expenditures for existing millage funds is the next step in the Township's efforts toward complete streets
- No equation between bicycle trails and complete streets
- Complete streets ordinance can be used as a tool to accomplish safe and efficient use of the Township's infrastructure
- Board member support for a road diet on Lake Lansing Road from Marsh to Murphy School and Central Park Drive

It was the consensus of the Board to have the Township Attorney review the language prior to introduction of the complete streets ordinance at the next Board meeting.

~~C. Update of Master Plan~~

D. Sign Ordinance, Changing Messages for Churches

Director Kieselbach summarized the issue of changing message signs at religious institutions as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 12, 2012.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Opinion of the Township attorney this ordinance amendment must apply to all allowed uses within a zoning district
- Difficulty in monitoring activity for code compliance
- Preference to prohibit changing message signs in all zoning districts except for gas station signs
- Concern with signs which promote a specific message
- Changing message sign at the corner of Grand River Avenue and Okemos Road is distractive as it is too close to the corner
- Preference for regulations regarding signs close to corners
- Changing message signs are not a good fit in quiet residential areas
- Reasonable request to allow churches to no longer have to change their message by hand
- Currently, there is no limit on the number of times churches can daily change their message by hand
- If the Board prohibits changing message signs (except gas stations), the existing changing message signs (e.g., Culvers) would become non-conforming
- Preference to leave the ordinance unchanged

It was the consensus of the Board not to move forward with an amendment to the sign ordinance to allow changing message signs for churches.

E. Special Use Permit #12021, Trilogy Skilled Care and Nursing Facility with 91 Beds on Central Park Drive

Director Kieselbach gave a brief overview of the special use permit request as outlined in staff memorandum dated May 12, 2012.

Michael Powell, Powell Engineering & Associates, 4700 Cornerstone Drive, White Lake, and the applicant's representative, offered a brief history on site selection and a synopsis of changes made to the project as a result of meetings with Township staff, the Planning Commission, Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads and residents of Central Park Estates.

Board members, staff and the applicant's representative discussed the following:

- Board member request for the applicant to alert neighbors regarding weekly generator testing
- Owner incorporates sound attenuating generators in their facilities
- Preference of two Board member for the applicant to keep the sidewalk link to Central Park Estates
- Sixty percent (60%) brick façade required by the Planning Commission
- Concern vinyl siding does not “stand the test of time”
- Materials used to construct the building must be harmonious with the neighborhood and surrounding area
- Board member preference for the exclusive use of brick
- Ninety to ninety-five percent (90-95%) of residential homes use good quality vinyl siding during construction
- Kohl's to the west has a large percentage of brick and Panera to the south is made entirely of brick
- Given the residential nature of the project, the applicant is attempting to blend with the existing neighborhood
- New plan proposes 101 parking spaces
- Building plans specifically designate the deferred parking areas which will be landscaped until such time as additional parking is needed
- Concern the size of the building is too large and not in harmony with the adjacent residential neighborhood
- State determination as to the square footage required per bed
- A bigger concern is the rest of the surrounding property is all zoned RA
- Board member belief the second access point could be through another property to the south into nearby commercial properties
- Concern another large mixed use development will front onto Central Park Drive in the future which will surround this neighborhood with large buildings
- Concern the surrounding property zoned RA will not be developed with residential homes
- Request for history of Board denial for special use permits for buildings greater than 25,000 square feet
- Guidance in the Township's ordinance for rationale in denying a request for buildings greater than 25,000 square feet
- Rationale for denying this project is the same nine (9) criteria as exists for other special use permits
- Parking lot is comprised of impervious surface
- Pervious pavement has a full drainage system underneath and must be vacuumed every year
- Perforated storm sewer piping runs between all the leeching basins and rain gardens around the site recharge the ground water
- Facility north of the Nokomis Center required additional parking due to offering skilled rehabilitative services which required specialists to travel to the facility
- Applicant worked with staff who determined the proposed facility has more parking than the facility on Marsh Road
- Services provided inside the Trilogy facility are performed by staff in-house
- Continued concern with the institutional look of the building
- State has approved more skilled care beds for this site than Trilogy is proposing to build

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at the August 9, 2012 Board meeting.

[Supervisor McGillicuddy recessed the meeting at 9:15 P.M.]

[Supervisor McGillicuddy reconvened the meeting at 9:23 P.M.]

F. Regional Fire Study

Fire Chief Cowper gave an in-depth overview of the Shared Public Services Initiative – Capital Area Fire Study dated June 6, 2012.

Township Manager Richards spoke to the recommendations of the study and the process of consolidation.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Study recommends the six (6) units of government give consideration to Phases 1 and 2, build a formal relationship and institute the practices which offer faster response time from the nearest unit and collect data to determine what is most advantageous
- Staff is looking for direction as to Board desire regarding level of Township involvement in the discussion
- Preference for the Township to work toward consolidation
- Desire for consolidation with the East Lansing Fire Department
- Possibility of rotating fire personnel to the various stations within both East Lansing and Meridian Township
- Consolidation would allow both fire departments to act as one
- Staff belief that under the aforementioned scenario, the consolidated department could operate with four (4) stations
- City of East Lansing currently does not employ part-time firefighters
- Concern with funding for legacy costs
- Firefighter retirement age is 50 with 25 years of service
- Board members preference to increase retirement age to 60 or 62 to receive benefits
- Each individual governmental unit would assume its own legacy costs
- Use of address specific GIS software to assist with mutual aid
- Preference to proceed toward an automatic mutual aid agreements; especially with Alaiedon Township for the buildings located north of I-96, south of Jolly Road
- Building owners and renters in Alaiedon Township would then capture Meridian's Insurance Services Office (ISO) class rating of 4 and save a significant amount of money in insurance premiums
- Preference to initially pursue more cooperative agreements in the multi-step process towards consolidation
- Change in cooperative agreements occur during Phase 1 and 2
- Phase 1 and 2 would form a committee to work toward consolidation
- City of East Lansing and Meridian Township have nearly identical run volumes, yet the City of East Lansing spends over \$7 million on fire department costs compared to Meridian's \$4,350,000
- Personnel station assignments v. equipment assignments
- Personnel station assignments are more cost effective
- Need to ensure that a reduction in administrative staff is not superficial and results in a significant cost savings when consolidation takes place
- Merging six (6) departments would not result in a reduction of administrative costs to one-sixth the amount
- Meridian Township is the most efficient department in the six (6) jurisdictions
- Need to retain fire inspectors to work on fire prevention
- Meridian Township has a population similar to Delta Township and similar response times
- Geographic area in square miles is similar between Delta and Meridian Townships
- Meridian Township has three fire stations and Delta Township has two stations
- Meridian Township has more parcels/structures than Delta and Delhi Townships
- Station location is important due to the railroad tracks
- If consolidation takes place, the City of East Lansing's north station can become the station north of the railroad tracks for Meridian Township
- Estimated time frames in the report from Plante and Moran for phasing are somewhat unrealistic
- Decisions made regarding the fire department must meet today's needs as well as those in the future

It was the consensus of the Board to have staff participate in discussions regarding implementation of the recommendations for Phase 1 and 2 of the study.

Trustee Veenstra moved to direct staff to negotiate with Alaieton Township to reach agreement so the Township's south fire station would serve the area south of Jolly Road. Seconded by Trustee Dreyfus.

Continued Board discussion:

- Motions are not made under discussion items
- Preference for Trustees to make this request of staff
- Alaieton Township must agree to use our services
- Suggestion to make this issue an item on the Board's next agenda

Trustee Veenstra withdrew his motion.

G. Financial Review

Finance Director Diana Hasse summarized the financial review of the Township as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 13, 2012.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Water and sewer funds are enterprise funds
- Finance staff uses a ten-year projection
- Estimates and projections can change
- Cost of water and sewer projects can increase
- Sufficient equity in the water and sewer funds, but the majority is in capital assets
- For 2012 to date, the Township has spent monies from these funds for operating costs at a faster rate than revenue has been received
- Township has an obligation to uphold its agreement regarding the benefit plans
- Township pays 50 percent of the health care cost for public safety retirees
- Concern with effect of unfunded liability on bond ratings
- Rolling projections for water and sewer maintenance are incorporated into the pricing, but smoothed over a ten-year period
- Rate models used for determining water and sewer rates
- Volume for water and sewer usage dropped significantly approximately three (3) years ago
- Township incurs fixed costs not directly tied to volume
- Township set rates based on actual costs for water and maintenance of the system
- Significant capital improvement costs in the sewer system which have come from the fund balance
- Over the last ten (10) years, the Township has spent \$5-6 million on capital improvements only in the sewer fund
- Lower water and sewer usage largely the result of system improvements
- Township replaces the pumps and motors in two (2) to three (3) lift stations on an annual basis
- Township maintenance for 28 lift stations
- Largest expense for the water system was the conversion to radio read meters
- Manpower for reading meters went from two full-time employees to one employee who reads meters once per month in approximately 8 hours
- Due to staffing constraints, Township does not currently meet MDEQ recommendations for flushing the water system on a biennial basis
- Township has approximately 1,800-1,900 valves in the water system
- In the last ten (10) years, staff has repaired more than 250 of the 300 broken water valves
- Township has 2,000 fire hydrants which need to be checked and flushed annually
- Sewer system should be cleaned approximately once every five (5) years to reduce Township liability in the event of a backup
- Water usage increased to 7.5 million gallons per day for the month of June due to the dry weather conditions
- Board may wish to look at going back to a fixed fee plus the commodity rate
- Current rate model is dependent upon accuracy of flow projections
- Current rate model is based solely on usage

- Not including a fixed fee increases the usage charge and maximizes the incentive for residents to conserve
- Preference to continue with current fee structure but increase water and sewer rates
- Meridian Township water and sewer fees are much lower than neighboring communities
- Current water and sewer rates are not adequate to maintain the system
- Belief “sewer only” residents have been overcharged for many years and pay a disproportionate percentage towards fixed fees
- Alternative ways to encourage water conservation
- Possible initiation of an irrigation ban with specified hours for water conservation
- Possibility of a two-tiered rate to encourage water conservation
- Peak rate usage drives up costs
- Rates must be set to cover costs for maintenance, replacements, breaks, etc.

It was the consensus of the Board to have staff prepare recommendations for the next Board meeting to address current shortfalls in funding for the Township Pension Plan, the post-employment health care benefit plan (OPEB) and the Public Works Water and Sewer Funds.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened Public Remarks.

Vance Kincaid, 4530 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, spoke in opposition to the Board’s decision to place a bond proposal for the central fire station on the November 6th General Ballot. He believed county systems are the next step to having desired efficiencies in provided services.

Stephanie Sheffer, 2090 Ashland Avenue, Okemos, voiced support for the Trilog Health Services project as its soon-to-be backyard neighbor.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke to Board member truthfulness and honesty.

Supervisor McGillicuddy closed Public Remarks.

13. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Trustee Ochberg noted the rejection of a project on aesthetic grounds cannot be sustained by Michigan law and suggested removing that language from the Township’s special use permit criteria.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor McGillicuddy adjourned the meeting at 10:55 P.M.

SUSAN MCGILLICUDDY
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

MARY M. G. HELMBRECHT, CMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary