

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2021 **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
TUESDAY, December 14, 2021 **6:00 pm**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson

ABSENT: Trustee Sundland

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Deputy Manager Perry, Fire Chief Hamel, Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt, IT Director Gebes, Chief of Police Plaga, Finance Director Mattison, Economic and Development Director Clark, Assessor Winstead

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLLCALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board.

Supervisor Styka is attending remotely from his home in Meridian Township due to health issues.

Trustee Jackson is attending remotely from her home in Meridian Township.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Okemos High School Boys Soccer Team State Champions

Coach Brian Guggemos gave a presentation on the Okemos Soccer team that won the state championship in 2021. Each player introduced themselves and what position they play.

B. 2021-2022 Township Goals

A moment of silence was taken for the victims of the weekend storms.

Manager Walsh presented the township's 2021 achievements and 2022 goals.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:35 pm

Michael Uusworth, 5948 Village Dr. Haslett, spoke about lack of care given to Meridian Township pathways during construction projects.

Courtland Jenkins, 2507 S. Wadsworth Lansing, spoke about how supportive Meridian Township leadership is of its residents, businesses and school. He expressed appreciation to the board for his time at Meridian Township.

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:43 pm

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Township Manager Walsh thanked the Board of Water and light and emergency services for their quick reaction to the power outages last week.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine

- Thanked the residents of Meridian Township for their support, the M-Team for their leadership, his staff and Manager Walsh for their help and support throughout this year.

Trustee Wisinski

- Environmental Commission wanted to thank Manager Walsh and Manager Yates for their continuing support of the wetlands education campaign.
- Requests for proposals have gone out for green grants. The grants go towards educating children on environmental issues.

Trustee Opsommer

- Michigan House Bill 5351 increased tax exemption status by doubling it to \$160,000 and will likely be further increased to \$180,000 before being voted on.
- Thanked Director Schmitt and Assistant Planner Chapman for work on the Lake Lansing Overlay District. A short-term amendment is likely to be applied to the area in the future.

Clerk Guthrie

- Currently there are 13 open positions in the townships various boards and commissions. Residents who wish to apply may do so on the township website at: <https://www.meridian.mi.us/Home/Components/FormBuilder/FormBuilder/ab645b1f6ad340fa8df777891a5f6bbe/1365>
- Okemos Mascot Selection Committee has narrowed their choices down to 10 mascot names.
- Attended friends of Okemos Library Board meeting. The Library Board is asking for any collection of item that can be displayed in the library.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Styka reviewed the Consent Agenda.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

A. Communications

Treasurer Deschaine moved that the communications not already assigned for disposition be referred to the Township Manager or Supervisor for follow-up. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Wisinski, Opsommer, Treasurer Deschaine, Clerk Guthrie, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

B. Approval of Minutes – November 16, 2021

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve and ratify the minutes of December 7, 2021 as presented. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Wisinski, Opsommer, Treasurer Deschaine, Clerk Guthrie, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

C. Bills

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows: Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Common Cash	\$	263,793.11
Public Works	\$	32,429.31
Trust & Agency	\$	<u>13.70</u>
Total Checks	\$	296,236.12
Credit Card Transactions	\$	4,554.66
11/12/2021 to 12/01/2021		
Total Purchases	\$	<u>300,790.78</u>
ACH Payments	\$	<u>594,784.51</u>

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Wisinski, Opsommer, Treasurer Deschaine, Clerk Guthrie, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS - NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Special Use Permit #21-00-011-2763 Grand River Avenue – Consumers Credit Union – Modification of Special Use Permit for Buildings Greater than 25,000 Square Feet

Trustee Jackson moved to approve the resolution for approval of the Special Use Permit amendment. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if the sign meets the current sign ordinance.

Director Schmitt replied it would only require Planning Commission approval for the LED portion of the sign, the size and height are compliant.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

B. Williamstown Township Police Contract

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the agreement to continue providing law enforcement Services to Williamstown Township beginning January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024 for emergency and non-emergency responses outside the 40 hours of weekly patrol and to authorize the supervisor and clerk to Sign the agreement. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Chief Plaga outlined the contract with Williamstown Township.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if the change from 80 to 40 hours of service provided to Williamstown would mean another officer is available in Meridian.

Chief Plaga replied that is correct.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Wisinski,
Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

C. 4th Quarter Budget Amendments

Trustee Jackson moved to approve the year end 2021 budget amendments with an increase in budgeted fund balance for the general fund in the amount of \$417,400 which projects a use of fund balance of \$690,085. Based on 2020 results, the projected fund balance at December 31, 2021 will be \$9,573,700. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

Director Mattison outlined the 4th Quarter Budget Amendments.

Treasurer Deschaine stated his understanding of the \$75,000 refund is that it's the first payment on the Eyde court settlement.

Director Mattison replied that is correct.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Wisinski, Treasurer Deschaine, Clerk Guthrie, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

D. 2022 Township Goals

Trustee Wisinski moved to approve the 2022 meridian township action plan as developed by the township board and administration. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

The board thanked staff and Manager Walsh for their work on the 2022 township goal setting.

Clerk Guthrie asked Manager Walsh when the board would discuss ARP funds.

Manager Walsh replied the board wished to take their time discussing the use of ARP funds and would bring in an expert to assist in how ARP funds can and cannot be spent.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

E. Board and Commission Reappointments

Clerk Guthrie stated that Mike Nevells wishes to be an alternate commissioner for a term of 1 year, and to strike him from the motion.

Trustee Opsommer moved to reappoint Brian Seipel to the Communications Commission for a 3 year term ending 12/31/2024. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

Trustee Opsommer moved to reappoint Mike Nevells as an alternate to the Communications Commission for a 1 year term ending 12/31/2022. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

Trustee Wisinski moved to confirm the supervisor's reappointment of Karla Hudson to the Transportation Commission for a two year term ending 12/31/23. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Poverty Exemption Guidelines

Trustee Opsommer outlined Poverty Exemption Guidelines for discussion. He stated that residents on land contracts do qualify for poverty exemption. He further stated the fiscal impact for Meridian Township in 2020 was \$8,305 and \$41,700 across all taxing jurisdiction. The 14 homes that qualified had a combined taxable value of \$794,832 which comes out to \$56,774 per home.

Trustee Opsommer stated the current plan is to keep 100% exemption at 1.35 and create a new tier at 1.85 for 50% exemption.

Trustee Opsommer asked Assessor Winstead to the podium to answer any questions.

Treasurer Deschaine stated raising the exemption will make housing more affordable. He asked if other communities do this.

Assessor Winstead stated it would be a unique approach if trying to bring in new families.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if this is granted coactively or can it be granted retroactively.

She stated it could only be granted for the current year.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if this was paid through Escrow.

Assessor Winstead replied that she would typically ask the Treasurer's office for that information. He stated 40% of the residents in the township pay through Escrow.

Trustee Opsommer stated if you look at section 8 housing voucher the waiting list is closed more than it's open. He further stated it now takes 25 months of tax delinquency to lose your home due to tax foreclosure.

Treasurer Deschaine stated only one or two homes are lost due to tax foreclosure in the township and will do research on how many residents lose their homes due to bank foreclosure.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 7:35 pm.

NONE

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 7:35 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Clerk Guthrie stated she would like the board to look at the January 4th meeting. The packet for the meeting would be due on a Wednesday.

Manager Walsh reported the meetings in January would be on January 4th and January 18th. He suggested changing the meetings to the 11th and the 25th, hold the joint meeting immediately after the meeting on the 25th and cancel the meeting on the 4th.

Trustee Opsommer moved to cancel the January 4th meeting and hold January meetings on the 11th and 25th. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

Trustee Wisinski

- Wished everyone happy and safe holidays.

Treasurer Deschaine

- Stated that the staff will be quite happy by January 11th as it will be the second week of Manager Walsh's four-day work weeks.

16. CLOSED SESSION- Township Manager 2021 Performance Review-Motion to go into a closed session to discuss the Township Manager's annual performance review under MCL 15.268(a), based on the Township Manager's request for a closed meeting. (This motion requires a simple majority roll call vote.)

Trustee Opsommer moved to go into a closed session to discuss the Township Manager's annual performance review under MCL 15.268(a), based on the Township Manager's request for a closed meeting. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Deschaine, Clerk Guthrie, Trustees Opsommer, Jackson, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

At 7:43 the board entered into a closed session.

17. TOWNSHIP MANAGER PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND CONTRACT

The board discussed Manager Walsh's contract.

Trustee Opsommer moved to strike item C on page 3 of the contract and to include the car allowance lump sum in the salary in section 4 of the contract increasing the salary to \$148,910, and to include a provision that would mirror the 2022 budgeted retention bonus

of a one-time payment in December 2022 in the amount of \$1000, and updating the citation for the personnel policy in the contract. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Trustee Opsommer, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Wisinski, Jackson

NAYS: None

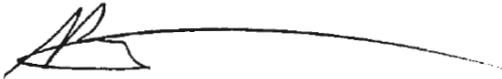
Motion carried: 6-0

18. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Opsommer moved to adjourn. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 6-0

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 9:41 pm.



RONALD J. STYKA,
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR



DEBORAH GUTHRIE
TOWNSHIP CLERK