

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
SPECIAL MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2021 STUDY SESSION **-APPROVED-**  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Township Hall Room  
WEDNESDAY, June 30, 2021 **6:00 pm**

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Fire Chief Hamel, Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt, Finance Director Mattison, Human Resources Director Tithof, Communications Manager Yates, Parks & Recreation Director Maisner, Economic Development Director Clark, IT Director Gebes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance

3. ROLLCALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATION

**NONE**

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:07 pm

**NONE**

Supervisor Styka Closed public remarks at 6:07 pm

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

7. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Review of 2021 Action Plan  
(1) COVID-19 Update

**Township Manager Walsh gave an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the Township.**

(2) Sustainability Plan

**Township Manager Walsh outlined the Township's sustainability plan.**

**Trustee Jackson asked what percentage of the Township's energy is represented by these new projects.**

**Township Manager Walsh replied he wasn't sure and would have an answer at a later date.**

(3) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

**Human Resources Director Tithof outlined the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan.**

(4) Redevelopment of Downtown Haslett and Okemos

**Economic Development Director Clark and Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt outlined the plan for the Redevelopment of Downtown Haslett and Okemos.**

**Trustee Opsommer moved to direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Code of Ordinances that would require Board approval for any MUPUD amendments located within the downtown submitted between may 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and July 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.**

**Staff and Township Board discussed what effect the motion would have on the project.**

**Trustee Opsommer moved to table the motion to direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Code of Ordinances that would require board approval for any MUPUD amendments located within the downtown submitted between may 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and July 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

(5) Local Road Program

**Township Manager Walsh outlined the Local Road Program.**

**Supervisor Styka stated a lot of citizens have been complaining about potholes, and asked if the excess rain had worsened road conditions. Manager Walsh replied it was part of the problem, but mostly the worst rated roads hadn't been worked on yet.**

(6) Broadband

**Township Manager Walsh outlined the plan for broadband improvements in the Township, he explained funding was coming from a grant received from the county.**

**Trustee Opsommer discussed the throttling of upload speeds by internet service providers and how it could be avoided with the township being the ISP.**

(7) MSU to Lake Lansing Pathway/Pathway Master Plan

**Township Manager Walsh outlined the Lake Lansing Pathway and Pathway Master Plan.**

(8) New Township/Community Signage

**Township Manager Walsh outlined the plan for new signage going up in the Township and Community.**

(9) Website Improvements

**Communications Manager Yates outlined the improvements being implemented into the Township website.**

(10) Pension

**Township Manager Walsh referred to his full report on Meridian Township's pension plan that he gave two weeks ago. The entirety of the report can be found in the Township Board Agenda Packet for June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

**B. Department Reports**

(1) Human Resources

**Human Resources Director Tithof gave a report on the Human Resources Department. Director Tithof stated there has recently been 17 new hires, 14 departures, 5 retirements, 6 promotions, 5 temporary and seasonal workers, 21 temporary election workers and 6 positions still open.**

(2) Finance

**Finance Director Mattison gave a report on the Finance Department.**

(3) Parks & Recreation

**Director Maisner gave a report on the Parks & Recreation Department.**

(4) Public Works & Engineering

**Township Manager Frank Walsh gave an update on the Public Works & Engineering Department.**

**Treasurer Deschaine stated some municipalities are using ARP funds to improve their water and sewer plants, he asked if the joint water authority has looked at what their capital needs would be for 5 to 10 years and if they had any recommendations for Meridian or East Lansing for capital expenditures.**

**Township Manager Frank Walsh stated he knows they look at their needs on a yearly basis, but he does not know what funds they plan to use and would get back to Treasurer Deschaine with an answer.**

(5) Information Technology

**Information Technology Director Gebes gave an update on the Information Technology Department, and outlined improvements being implemented.**

(6) Community Planning & Development

**Community Planning & Development Director Schmitt gave a report, and discussed with the Board the Community Planning & Development Department.**

**Trustee Opsommer asked for an update on deliberations on form based code.**

**Director Schmitt replied he has read through it and is working on it but can't give a full report at this time.**

(7) Economic Development

**Economic Development Director Amber Clark gave a report and discussed with the Board the Economic Development Department.**

**Trustee Opsommer asked for a report on Linda Barr's case for a home occupation ordinance amendment. Director Clark stated it was making progress and that Linda Barr had spoken to several Board Members. Supervisor Styka said he is one of the people Linda Barr had spoken to and relayed that he didn't think she currently had a very good case for using her home as a place of business.**

(8) Assessing

**NONE**

(9) Communications/HOMTV

**Communications Manager Yates gave a report on the Communications Department and HOMTV.**

(10) Police

**Police Chief Plaga gave a report on the Police Department. Chief Plaga stated that Cultural Competency and Implicit Bias training has been attended by all Police and Fire staff. Chief Plaga stated 38 officers have been sworn in out of the maximum of 41 allowed.**

**Trustee Jackson asked about Meridian Police involvement with community mental health.**

**Chief Plaga stated his department has deployed a system with the help of IT Director Gebes that has helped peacefully resolve several mental health crises.**

**Trustee Opsommer discussed candidate community sponsorship and other points of the report with Chief Plaga.**

(11) Fire

**Fire Chief Hamel gave a report on the Fire Department. Chief Hamel reported his department is fully staffed and Township ambulances are very busy as they assist nearby jurisdictions. Trustee Opsommer discussed call volume data with Chief Hamel.**

(12) Administration

**Town Manager Walsh gave a report on the administration of the Township. He reported the Township is well funded, and its customer service and infrastructure are great.**

**Trustee Jackson discussed the "Talk to the Manager Hotline" implemented as part of COVID-19 response. Manager Walsh stated he felt the Hotline was very successful.**

8. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 9:30 pm.

**NONE**

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 9:30 pm.

9. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

**Treasurer Deschaine spoke about the importance of teamwork and it leading to success.**

10. ADJOURNMENT

**Treasurer Deschaine moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 7-0

**Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 9:31 pm.**

  
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RONALD J. STYKA,  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

  
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DEBORAH GUTHRIE  
TOWNSHIP CLERK