

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.349.1232, Virtual Meeting via Zoom
TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021 **6:00 pm.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson (arrived at 6:06 pm), Opsommer, Wisinski

ABSENT: Trustee Sundland

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Director of Public Works Perry, Fire Chief Hamel, Community Planning and Development Director Kieselbach, Information Technology Director Gebes, Parks and Recreation Director Maisner, Finance Director Mattison, Human Resources Director Tithof, Economic Development and Neighborhoods Director Clark, Communications Manager Yates, Principal Planner Menser

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Introduction of New Firefighter/Paramedic Gavin Ulman – Chief Hamel introduced new Firefighter/Paramedic Gavin Ulman.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:04 pm

Alex Brace, Executive Director, Small Talk Children's Advocacy Center, stated they were a non-profit located in Lansing serving children in Ingham and Eaton Counties that were victims of sexual and physical abuse. He gave an overview of the Center's services and the Child Abuse Prevention Month Awareness campaign and the blue pinwheel gardens. He thanked the Board, staff and the Township for their partnership and support.

John Faichney, 3566 Kansas Street, Okemos, spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning on Kansas Road from residential to professional office and asked the Board to support their neighborhood and keep the area designated residential.

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:11 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported

- COVID Precautions in Township Facilities – staff is balancing the safety of the team members and people entering the building to provide the level of services needed by the public
- Community Planning and Development Director Mark Kieselbach is retiring and staff is conducting a search for his replacement with applications due this Friday.
- Township has engaged the Michigan State Police and retired State Police Internal Affairs Officer Twana Powell to conduct an internal review as it relates to the March 10 arrest that started as retail fraud and then escalated. All materials will be released within the next ten days.
- Broadband - as a Township Board goal, the committee and staff are taking the lead in the County and thanked County Controller Greg Todd for his assistance.
- First Quarter Budget Report – was sent to Board members and noted the revenue receipts for the Fire Department Ambulance transport were low. The issue was researched and one of the revenue deposit was received after the posting of first quarter figures. The adjusted figure is \$343,000 not \$240,000 and it appears the project revenue will be higher than \$1.3 million at the end of the year.
- The Jolly Road Rezoning Request will be on the May 6 Township Board meeting.
- Building Permit Review – received \$13 million in new investment in 2020 in the first three months of the year and in the first three months of 2021, received \$11 million, slightly under the amount from last year.
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority will meet on April 29 and plan to issue the first reimbursement to the developers of the Okemos Village project.
- New ATV for the Fire Department: purchase was recommended by Chief Hamel to assist with grass fires and medical responses on trails and land preserves. After discussions with the Supervisor, staff will be moving forward with this purchase of approximately \$20,000 which is not in the budget.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Styka:

- Received communication from League of Women’s Voters indicating they will have individuals attend the township meetings to observe and will then update the League. Doris May has been assigned to the township.

Treasurer Deschaine:

- Working to reduce staffing due to COVID and thanked the residences for mailing in or dropping off their tax and utility bill payments; reduced visits inside the building by 90%.
- Department is working at half-staff until the COVID crisis has past
- Attended the March meeting of the CATA Board and the April meeting of the EDC
- Next week will be attending the MTA annual convention with other board members which is being held virtually
- In the board packet is the First Quarter Treasurer’s Report, which is close to last year’s First Quarter Report. The tax revenues are approximately one percent off and most of the residents and commercial operations have been able to pay their taxes during this Pandemic
- In the board packet is the Annual Arbitrage Report from Bingham Arbitrage Rebate Services Inc. They are hired to review the bond revenues and the report is submitted to the Internal Revenue Service.

Trustee Wisinski:

- The Environmental Commission has approved two green infrastructure grants. One grant is for Rademore Montessori School to improve their nature trail and their greenhouse. The second one is for Haslett Middle School to create an outdoor learning lab and classroom.
- Will be attending the Ground Water Board Management Meeting tomorrow

Supervisor Styka

- Received communication of support from the Communications Commission on the Township's efforts to move forward with the broadband goal.
- The second Food Pantry is being installed at the Haslett Library. The first pantry was installed at Faith Lutheran Church on Dobie Road.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

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 Wisinski

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

Treasurer Deschaine referred to agenda item #9 F School Tax Collection Agreements and stated the many Townships charge their school districts a flat fee or a percentage to collect school taxes, Meridian Township absorbs the cost and does not charge a fee.

A. Communications

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

B. Approval of Minutes – March 16, 2021 Virtual Regular Meeting

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the March 16, 2021 Virtual Regular Meeting, as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

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

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 Wisinski

Common Cash		\$	228,471.85
Public Works		\$	78,919.58
Trust & Agency		\$	<u>2,496.81</u>
	Total Checks	\$	309,888.24
Credit Card Transactions		\$	10,725.07
03.25.2021 – 04.07.2021			
	Total Purchases	\$	<u><u>320,613.31</u></u>
ACH Payments		\$	<u><u>784,243.93</u></u>

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

D. Quarterly Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Deschaine moved to accept the Quarterly Treasurer’s Report. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

E. Annual Arbitrage Report

Treasurer Deschaine moved to accept the Annual Arbitrage Report. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

F. School Tax Collection Agreements

Treasurer Deschaine move that the Township Board approve the 2021 Tax Collection Requests and Agreements for East Lansing, Okemos, Williamson, Haslett and Ingham County Intermediate School Districts. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

G. Resolution of Support for Community Projects Funding Applications

Treasurer Deschaine move to adopt the Okemos Road CFP Application Resolution of Support as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY - NONE

11. HEARINGS - NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. 2021 Citizen Survey

Trustee Jackson move to approve the 2021 Community Survey creation, implementation and analysis with Cobalt Community Research for costs not to exceed \$17,975 and authorize Township Manager to create and sign the contract. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

Discussion:

- Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Clark summarized the request for proposals, review process of the proposals, staff's recommendations, and the timeline if the proposal is approved
- William SaintAmour, Executive Director, Cobalt Community Research, outlined the survey processes, the use of diverse demographic characteristics to create the databases for the random sampling, and evaluation process used to analyze the survey responses

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

B. Extension of Redi-Ride Services

Treasurer Deschaine move to request that CATA expand Meridian Redi-Ride to include the following service locations: Autism Centers of Michigan, Lansing Urgent Care in Haslett, Golden Woods Early Care and Preschool in Haslett, Monticello's Market & Butcher Block, Hope Network Neuro Rehabilitation in East Lansing and Pleasantrees East Lansing. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer

Discussion;

- Suggested Treasurer Deschaine speak with CATA to include the multi-module gateway facility in East Lansing

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

C. National Child Abuse Prevention Month Resolution

Clerk Guthrie expressed appreciation to Alex Brace, Executive Director, Small Talk Children's Advocacy Center, for outlining the services for abuse children and the work they do with the Police Department and volunteering with the Parks and Recreation Department to plant pinwheel gardens. She is a supporter and advocate for the Center and wanted to recognize their work and Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Clerk Guthrie moved to approve the Resolution Recognizing April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Meridian Township. Seconded by Trustee Jackson

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

D. Sexual Assault Awareness Month Resolution

Clerk Guthrie stated she was a long-time supporter of sexual assault awareness and felt everyone should do whatever they could to curtail sexual assault in the community. She appreciates the efforts of township staff and the leadership of Township Manager Walsh and MTeam in addressing this issue in the community.

Chief Plaga reported his staff works with Small Talk to provide trainers to assist with increasing community awareness in identifying victims or potential victims, Police staff could then provide services and conduct investigations where necessary. Township has a dedicated detective with specialized training to investigate these cases, Det. Becky Payne is well respected in this area, and her advice is sought regionally in these cases.

Clerk Guthrie move to approve the Resolution Recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Meridian Township. Seconded by Trustee Jackson

Discussion:

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Zoning Amendment #21010

Director Kieselbach outlined the proposed amendment to require Township Board approval of special use permits for motor vehicle sales and service establishment and automobile dealerships in the C-2 and C-3 (Commercial) zoning districts. The Planning Commission held a public hearing and voted to recommend approval of the proposed amendment.

Discussion:

- The word “body shop” is not included in definitions but it is a use allowed by right in the Industrial District. A dealership cannot have a body shop in C-2 or C-3 zoning districts. The existing dealerships on Grand River were allowed body shops because they were in place before the C-2 or C-3 zoning districts were developed.
- Question was raised on if body shops should be allowed.
- Suggested Director Clark check with the current dealerships on if they have a body shop or offered mechanical services.
- It was suggested to make the Ordinance permissive and allow body shops be a consideration of the special use permit in C-3 but not C-2 where it could be close to a residential area.
- Suggested it be left as written unless there are inquiries

Board consensus to place this item on the next Board meeting agenda.

B. Utility Shut-off Extension

Deputy Manager Perry outlined the water shutoff moratorium extension and recommended it end on June 30, 2021. He stated the date was chosen because the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s eviction moratorium expires on June 30, 2021. This would allow the Township to reach out to residents who may require a payment plan to pay their utility invoices. He stated there is a small number of residents affected.

Trustee Opsommer moved to suspend the rules to allow this item to be taken up this evening. Supported by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Trustee Opsommer move to direct the Department of Public Works to suspend the use of water shutoffs for non-payment until June 30 2021. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine

Discussion:

- Recommend this item be brought back if there is a need in the community.
- Concern was raised in the owner/tenant situation where a tenant could run up a bill and then move out leaving the owner to pay the utility bill.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

C. 4th of July Fireworks

Supervisor Styka stated the Township Manager is recommending postponing the firework for another year but he thought about moving ahead with the fireworks before the news about the recent increase in COVID cases. He asked the board members their recommendations

Discussion:

- Support postponing because of the increase in positive cases and hospitalizations especially with the younger generation and would not support a congregation at this time
- Suggest waiting on the celebration when it is safe to congregate
- If approved, this item is not budgeted, it is 85 days away, it needs to be planned for and there are only a small amount of companies who can provide this type of entertainment
- Not sure it is the right thing to do even though other communities are having events
- Suggested revisiting hosting a celebration around the end of summer or Labor Day

- Like the schools and governor suggested that if the community gets to a vaccination rate at 70% then that is something to celebrate

It was the Board consensus to not hold a 4h of July Fireworks Celebration

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 7:54 pm.

John Faichney, 3566 Kansas Street, Okemos, stated he appreciated the decision to not hold a July 4th Fireworks Celebration. He asked if any new information on the May 6 presentation would be provided to the neighborhood.

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 7:56 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS -NONE

Director Kieselbach stated the applicant for Rezoning #21020 asked to have the item postponed until the May 6 Township Board meeting in order to complete additional research. Any new information will be included in the Township Board packet. On May 6, it will be listed as a discussion item and will include all of the communications received by the Planning Commission, minutes from the Planning Commission meetings, and staff reports.

Manager Walsh asked if any board members would like to participate in the review of applications for the Director of Community Planning and Development to send him an email.

Trustee Wisinski thanked Director Kieselbach for his years of services, teaching her about planning and wished him the best of luck.

Trustee Jackson stated she was surprised Director Kieselbach did not retire when he hit 40 years. She learned about Meridian Township and serving on a volunteer basis either directly or indirectly from Director Kieselbach, She will miss him, his wisdom, even temperament and enjoy your retirement. ‘

16. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Opsommer moved to adjourn. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 8:01 pm.

RONALD J. STYKA,
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

DEBORAH GUTHRIE,
TOWNSHIP CLERK