



# 2021

## Annual Report

Charter Township of Meridian



### Meridian Township

5151 Marsh Road  
Okemos, MI  
48864  
517.853.4000



[meridian.mi.us](http://meridian.mi.us)

# TOWNSHIP BOARD MEMBERS

**Ronald J. Styka, Supervisor**

**Deborah Guthrie, Clerk**

**Phil Deschaine, Treasurer**

**Courtney Wisinski, Trustee**

**Patricia Herring Jackson, Trustee**

**Dan Opsommer, Trustee**

**Kathy Ann Sundland, Trustee**





**To: Board Members**

**From: Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager**

**Date: February 10, 2022**

**Re: 2021 Annual Report**

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The Meridian Township Management Team is pleased to present you with the Township's 2021 Annual Report. The enclosed report of departmental activities is meant to satisfy the requirements of the Charter Township Act and provide our residents with a complete overview of 2021 operations. This report is a compilation of activities provided by each department.

A copy of this report will be on file in the Clerk's Office, both libraries and posted on the Township's website at [www.meridian.mi.us](http://www.meridian.mi.us).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions regarding this report. We will continue our efforts in 2022 to work as a team united in spirit for the betterment of our 45,000 Township residents.

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# 2021 GOALS ACTION PLAN

**A. Maintain unparalleled customer service and public safety throughout the Global COVID-19 Pandemic. Be mindful of the struggle facing our Meridian business community during COVID-19, develop and implement creative programs to assist our partners.**

In addition to the business grants that the township graciously provided, the entire Meridian Team was mindful of the need to continue providing exemplary customer service through and beyond COVID. Meridian Township has a reputation for caring and compassionate customer service. After all, how many other Michigan communities approve a local tax to help their fellow residents who struggle to cover necessities?

Our COVID HOTLINE continued into 2021. Our state association of Michigan local government leaders has asked Meridian Township to lead a statewide keynote on how we cared for our team during the pandemic. Our goal is to continue to be leaders in Michigan regardless of the crisis or need.

**B. Continue progress on the Meridian Township Sustainability Plan goal of 100% renewable energy use for Township facilities by 2035 by installing an additional 120kW of photovoltaic panels on Township property. Upon installation of the additional 120 kW panels in 2021, we will be at 60% of the required 300kW needed in combination with energy efficiency measures and renewable energy provider purchases to meet the 100% goal.**

In the summer of 2021, the Township completed the installation of a 142 kW DC flat panel system on the roof of the Service Center. In a typical year, on average, we anticipate the 142 kW system to generate 100% of the electrical usage of the Service Center. The systems generation statistic and history can be viewed on our Township website.

Based on the baseline electric usage year of 2018, the Township has seen considerable energy purchase requirements go down as significant capital investments into solar panels and energy efficient systems has been made at several Township Buildings. The Municipal Building, Service Center and the South Fire Station can now boast a 59% power purchase reduction requirement from the baseline year. Future capital investments and energy reduction projects such as the office light conversion to LED's completed in 2021 and budgeted for in 2022 will continue the progress made towards reaching the goals outlines in the Township Sustainability Plan.



**C. Develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan with specific goals and objectives.**

The Township continues to implement its DEI mission statement into the practices and culture of the organization. In January, we incorporated the Board-approved Non-Discrimination in Hiring Policy into our Personnel Policy Manual, and in August, our leadership and Trustees participated in a 4-hour virtual DEI training presented by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. We are currently working with MSU, LCC, and other DEI-specialized training entities in order to plan and offer regular training to leadership and staff in the upcoming year and beyond.

**D. Culminate our decade long effort to redevelop Downtown Okemos and Haslett with vertical construction.**

The Village of Okemos, LLC development remains a priority for the departments to fulfill through efficient partnerships. The first action taken was to remove the blight that stood in place of our downtown. Through the use of the Meridian Redevelopment Fund (MRF) the Village of Okemos developers came to the Township with an application requesting the use of the funds toward sheeting and shoring. The request was approved by the Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Township Board with incentives to complete demolition before the end of the spring season.

By February, all of the previously blighted buildings were removed to usher in the new development. The successful completion of this portion of the project proves the Township's ability to work as a financial partner with a developer to bring the community updated spaces.



Soon after the arrival of our new Community Planning & Development Director Tim Schmitt, the developer submitted a request for an amendment to their approved Mixed Use Planned Unit Site Plan. This second amendment was requested to phase residential development on Ardmore and reduce the commercial suites on Hamilton road. The Township Board and community were not in support of a reduced commercial space downtown and phased development to begin on Ardmore. Director Schmitt acknowledged the financial climate and did approve a reduction in the height of the buildings from five stories to four. He also approved the removal of the surface parking deck. The developer will be held to a concept that includes at least 32,000 sq. ft. of commercial first-floor space and no more than 200 residential units. These changes keep the overall look and feel of the development close to the original proposal. It also allows for the developer to gain the financial support of private lenders as the financial risk was reduced.

A funding gap may exist and could be supported by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). The Village of Okemos project could begin to see construction in 2022 if the previously mentioned approvals are given by March of 2022. It is the sole focus of the staff to work closely with the Village of Okemos LLC team, MEDC staff, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) stakeholders, BRA stakeholders, Township Board Members, and our residents to support a start date by June 2022.

One development upgrade in the Haslett PICA is the Haslett Marathon at 1619 Haslett Road. This site is the only centrally located gas station in the Haslett School District. It is a “service station” concept as patrons can buy gas and have repairs/maintenance completed on their vehicles. This unique construction project allowed the business owner to stay open during construction.



The Township worked with the developer to allow for demolition and construction permits to be issued concurrently. Demolition of gas tanks, surface parking, and other pavement made way for the new building construction. Members of the community were shocked by the placement of the new building and its height. It reminded our staff that many community members do not know the vision of the Board and the Planning Commission calls for the intersection of Marsh and Haslett roads to become urban “downtowns”. Working with the Communications Team, we developed short videos for the public to understand the reasons behind the design. The recent Haslett Market Study indicates a desire for more upscale retail for residents in the area. The updates at the Haslett Marathon will include take-out food options with quality car maintenance services. The project is an estimated \$1 million dollars with \$300,000 in brownfield reimbursement for site contamination.



Pine Village Senior Community is an approved four story Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MUPUD) with approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 132 residential units. This year the cost of construction skyrocketed to over 30% higher than average costs. Developers that did not have specific material and labor contracts pre-COVID-19, opted to wait out the spike in materials. In May, the Pine Village team also submitted a request to amend their MUPUD. The approved change allowed the developer to rearrange the entrance to the site from Haslett Road and also made a small adjustment to the floor plan. With a rebound in the cost of materials within the last quarter of the year, the Pine Village Development Team is successfully moving forward. Director Schmitt and the Planning Team continue to review their construction design details. In a recent instance, the Pine Village Development Team redesigned the communal dining space to allow for residents to spread out and provide “social distancing”. The design adjustment was made by the Development Team, as they consider life with COVID-19.

The Pine Village Development has an approved Brownfield Plan that incorporates reimbursement to the developer for eligible activities. The total \$2,595,332 of eligible reimbursement included \$472,160 in interest if the demolition of 1637 Haslett road was completed by November 1, 2021. The deadlines for the interest incentive were missed and the developer is prepared to move ahead with the project without the interest. The Community Planning and Economic Development Departments are confident that demolition for 1637 Haslett road will begin in 2022 with vertical construction to begin in early spring 2022. There is a partial approval for demolition of 1655 Haslett road for the L&L building only with the Hudson Senior Development Team. The demolition of that property will be considered when a new proposed project for Haslett Village Square is approved.

**E. Implement the second year of our Local Road Enhancement Program by improving a minimum of 15 miles of local roads.**

The second year of the 10-year program provided funding for an additional resurfacing of almost 9 miles of local roads in the Township.

Of the 8.87 miles of roads slated for work, the following were completed during the 2021 construction season: Skyline (North of Margate), Kingcross, Shaw, Potter, Edson, Colby, Park (Lake Lansing), Cliffdale, White Ash, Buckingham, Sapphire, Sequoia, Comanche, Cochise, Tomahawk, Lagoon, Wausau, Osage, Seneca, Ivywood, Mistywood, Silverwood, Shortwood, Oakwood, Indian Glen, Mojave, Farm Meadows, Cherrywood, Butternut, Conifer Circle, Autumnwood, Timberview, Fairhills, and Rainbow Court. Because of the delays caused by excess precipitation this construction season, Pine Hollow, Mereford, Fenwick and Overglen will be completed in the spring of 2022.



The work affected many of our residents all summer, and we appreciate their patience and understanding as we worked to complete our second year of work of the 10-year program. In addition to the rehabilitation and resurfacing work, our preservation program is ready to commence in the spring of 2022 and will provide 7.61 miles of crack filling and 1.5 miles of cape sealing work. These two types of preservation work will allow our “good” roads to last longer by slowing their deterioration. Funding for this preventative maintenance program is provided from the Township General Fund to allow all of the road bond revenue to go towards reconstruction and resurfacing work.

The resulting rehabilitation and preventative maintenance work this year allowed our local road network Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) to go from 4.48 in 2019 to 5.37 at the completion of all the identified 2020 program work.





In addition to our local road program, Ingham County also provided several paving overlay projects in the Township. Work included the resurfacing of Van Atta Road south of the bridge, a section of Cornell Road by Haslett Road, Towar Avenue and Coleman Road.

The Hagadorn Road resurfacing project from Mt. Hope to the Red Cedar Bridge was also completed in 2020.



**F. Develop a comprehensive plan to facilitate access to affordable Broadband across the entire Township.**

In cooperation with Ingham County, we will be participating in a broadband assessment and planning project using Merit Network Inc. as a consultant. According to our partners at Ingham County, our first project team meeting will commence in December and continue into 2022. The primary work will focus on quantifying internet availability and demand in Meridian Township and the greater Ingham County. Funding for the project is being provided by Ingham County.

**G. Complete Phase 1 and 2 of the MSU to Lake Lansing Pathway and review the Pathway Master Plan.**

Phase one and phase two of the MSU to Lake Lansing pathway is being prepared for bidding this winter. Significant surveying and engineering were required in the development of these projects. Phase 1 is the more difficult of the two, as it includes a river crossing and skirts difficult terrain and required the acquisition of two parcels requiring environmental due diligence work.

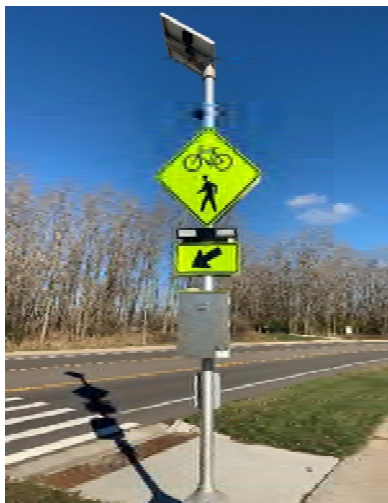
All funding for both phases one and two have been secured, and we look forward to starting construction in 2022.



Phase IIb, which was a project to widen the pathway along Okemos Road from the Service Center to the Inter Urban, was completed in 2021.



The Shaw Street connector was also constructed this year in conjunction with the local road-paving program. This connector will provide a route from the future MSU-Lake Lansing Phase III section in downtown Haslett to Lake Lansing South Park. Preliminary design for Phase III is underway as we look to secure the necessary land and funding for the final phase of the project.

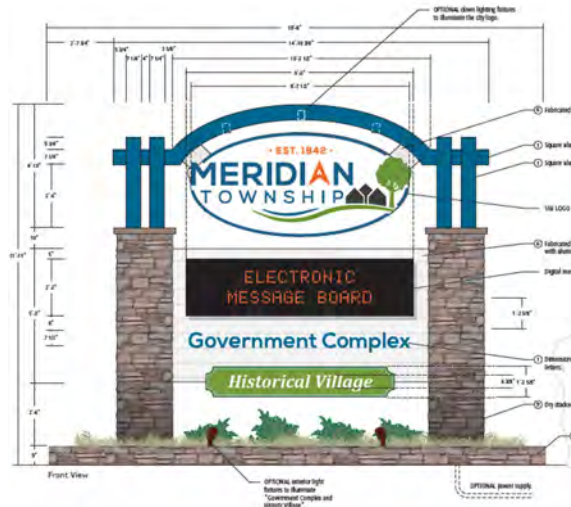


As part of the pathway work, several RRFB's were installed for safer pedestrian crossing at Central Park, and Haslett/Van Atta. Two additional RRFB's will also be installed at Hagadorn/Shaw and on Okemos Road yet this year.

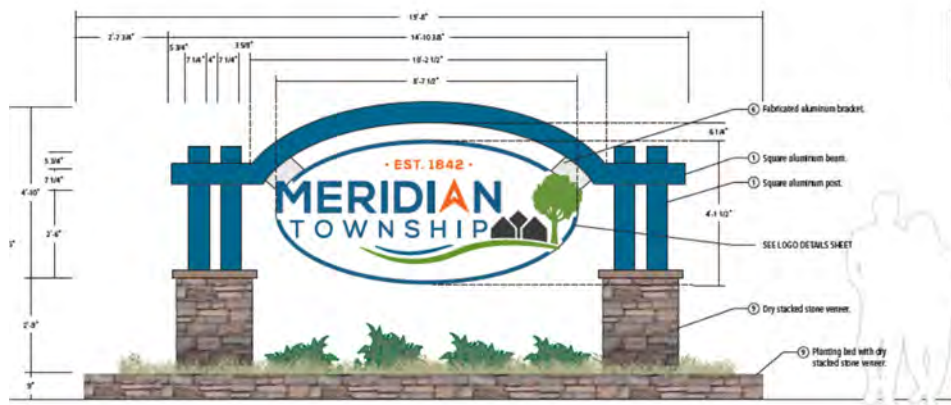
The Pathway Master Plan was also updated for the next five years this summer. The plan was presented to several Boards and Commissions with final adoption by the Township Board this summer. The 2021 Pathway Master Plan can be found on the website.

**H. Further our branding efforts with the addition of new “Welcome to Meridian Township” signage.**

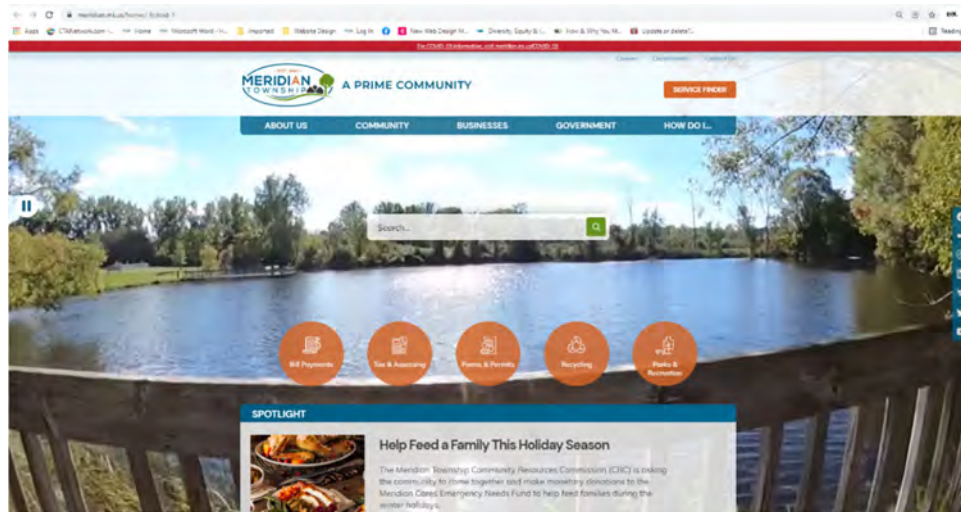
This year, Corbin Design assisted the Township with the development of a signage master plan that is based upon the Township logo and brand standards. This new sign plan will be used by our Team to purchase and install new community signage for all of our properties and buildings moving forward.



In the spring of 2022, we will be installing two new monument signs at the entrances to the Municipal Building, new Municipal Complex wayfinding signage to assist our visitors, and four new gateway signs for our Township along our major roads leading into the community. New signs for the Meridian Township Park System are also proposed. The new signs will create a consistent community image.



**I. Work with Granicus to upgrade the design of our Meridian Township website to improve functionality, as well as, give a new look and experience to site visitors.**



Industry standard states a website should be re-evaluated and revamped every 2-3 years, the previous Township website was launched in 2017. The Township Website Redesign Project initially began in 2020 with an internal audit of website content. In April 2021, the Granicus Project Manager and Communications staff started the Innovator Redesign Implementation Timeline with the Discovery/Consulting Phase of the project. Website traffic tracking utilizing heat maps and analytical data was the baseline for layout and design decisions. The Graphic Design, Development, Content Migration and Soft Launch Phases of the project took several months to complete. The redesigned website was launched and live to the public on November 15. The goal of the website refresh is to strengthen the Township's online presence and includes a new look and experience for site visitors. Added features and modified navigation provides community members with improved functionality and encourage additional use of the Township's online services such as live web forms, online payments and the new Service Finder component. The website remains mobile friendly and responsive. Accessibility enhancements have also been made and will continue to be addressed in the future. The website redesign has been undertaken as part of an existing contract with the Township's website host, Granicus, at minimal cost to the Township. The Communications Department will continue to work on streamlining content and making improvements to the site's navigation in the weeks and months to come

**J. Fulfill our promises made to voters in 2017 by allocating enhanced pension payments to MERS and maintaining 73 emergency responders.**

Back in 2017, our residents overwhelmingly approved a 1.483 mill levy to support additional police officers, paramedics, the purchase of a new ladder truck and paying down our pension liability. We promised voters we would increase our police ranks to 41, fire to 32, purchase a new ladder truck in 2021 and contribute an additional \$1,500,000 per year to eradicate our unfunded pension liabilities.

After four years of receiving the additional tax revenue, we have increased our police ranks to 41, fire to 34, ordered a \$950,000 ladder truck and contributed on average \$1,850,000 per year to unfunded pension liabilities. Not only have we kept our promise, we have well surpassed our lofty goals. While MERS suggest we use a 7.35% rate of return, Meridian Township will continue to pay down our MERS unfunded pension liability by using a 5.35% rate of return. Our target remains 100% funding.

# ACCOUNTING AND BUDGETING



The Department of Accounting and Budgeting is responsible for all aspects of the Township's accounting system. The Department maintains the general ledger, processes outgoing payments through the accounts payable system, approves purchase orders, processes utility billing transactions, prepares and monitors the budget, coordinates the pension board meeting, coordinates grant accounting, and is the coordinating department for the annual financial audit.

Meridian Cares functions to ensure that the human infrastructure within the community remains strong and vital. To that end, the program strives to help residents by developing, coordinating, and promoting local resources.

Information, referral, or emergency assistance was provided to Township residents for various services on an as-needed basis. 802 requests were received and included, but were not limited to, emergency assistance with housing, utilities, furniture, food, clothing, transportation, and holiday food baskets. Requests for assistance came from 439 households. Need for financial assistance fluctuated greatly, due to the availability of other assistance, such as pandemic unemployment and federally funded rental assistance.

Year	Number of Households Served	Funding Spent
2016	488	\$9,810
2017	436	\$8,475
2018	509	\$10,589
2019	465	\$16,855
2020	398	\$18,311
2021	439	\$38,307

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **2020 Township Audit**

The annual audit was completed by Yeo & Yeo CPA's & Business Consultants. The audit was given a clean review. With the 2020 audit, we implemented GASB Statement No. 84 Fiduciary Activities. A single audit was required for the 2020 fiscal year because the Township received Federal Grant funds in excess of \$750,000. This audit was also performed by YEO & YEO and the Township was given a clean review as well. This single audit will be required for the next few years.

The Township submitted its 2019 audited financial reports to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 2019 audit.

### **2022 Budget**

The 2022 budget was presented to the Township Board on September 7, 2021 and approved at the

September 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. The budget is showing a use of \$2.4 million in use of the General Fund, but the Township will still have a strong expected fund balance of \$8.5 million.

**State of Michigan New Chart of Accounts**

The State of Michigan has updated its Uniform Chart of Accounts. All local units of Government must adopt the new chart of accounts. This must be adopted for all units with a September 30, 2021 fiscal year end or after. With the help of BS&A and the IT department we have made the necessary changes to the Townships chart of accounts. The new accounts were implemented on Thursday November 11<sup>th</sup>. The Veterans Day holiday made it easier to make the necessary changes with most of the staff out of the office.

**Federal Grants**

In May of 2021, we received Federal Grant funding for the Public Safety and Public Health Payroll Reimbursement Program (PSPHPR) in the amount of \$915,715.20. This was a CARES Grant to offset first responder pay during COVID.

In October of 2021, we received the first half of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The first half of the plan payment was \$2,260,631.50. We will receive the second payment of the same amount in October of 2022.

**TEAM MEMBERS**

Miriam Mattison, Director  
Bernie Faulkner, Accountant  
Christina Weber, Bookkeeper  
Korissa Freier, Bookkeeper  
Kimberly Graham, Account Payable Clerk  
Darla Jackson, Human Services Specialist

# ADMINISTRATION



The Township Manager works directly with the Township Board and the various departments of Meridian Township. The Manager is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Township, budget preparation and administration, human resources, public service, public safety, public works, parks and recreation, and community relations. The Department Directors report directly to the Township Manager.

Numerous activities and projects were accomplished in 2021 under the leadership of the Township Manager's office:

- Coordinated the 2021 Goals and Objectives process.
- Continued to seek opportunities to reduce overall operating costs.
- Development and oversight of the Township's 2022 Budget.
- Continued our COVID-19 hotline and unparalleled customer service to serve the community during the pandemic.
- Began Police Tele-Health Mental Health Program and Fire Paramedic Sponsorship Program.
- Following the retirement of Mark Keiselbach, we were fortunate to select Tim Schmitt as our new Community Planning and Development Director. Tim brings energy, passion and customer service to our team.
- With Dave Lee's resignation, we were able to recruit and bring Ashley Winstead to her new role as Assessor. Ashley brings energy and strategic thinking to our team.
- Under the Board's direction, we were able to provide create food pantries for our residents.
- Accepted \$2,260,631 in American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding.
- Attended the monthly meetings of the Okemos Downtown Development Authority and the Economic Development Corporation.
- Continued our collective efforts to foster an environment that is welcoming, diverse and inclusive.
- Facilitated the Copper Creek groundbreaking.
- Conducted the 2021 Citizen Survey.
- Installed our third Solar Array.
- Reconstruction and resurfacing of nine miles of local roads and eight miles of preventative maintenance.
- Launched an updated Township Web Site.
- Created the IT Assessment Plan.

## **TEAM MEMBERS**

Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager  
Derek N. Perry, Deputy Township Manager/Director of Public Works & Engineering  
Michelle Prinz, Executive Assistant



# ASSESSING

The Assessing Department is responsible for establishing assessments of taxable property for the equitable distribution of the property tax burden in accordance with Michigan's General Property Tax Act and other applicable statutes. The Assessing Department's responsibilities include creating the annual assessment roll, maintaining ownership records and property descriptions for taxing purposes, processing Personal Property Statements and personal property exemption requests, and inspecting existing property and new construction for property tax purposes. Taxable values established by the Assessing Department annually are used by the Township Treasurer to produce property tax bills for property within the Township.

## 2021 TOP TEN TAXPAYERS

2021 TOP TEN TAXPAYERS (BY TAXABLE VALUE)					
RANK	TAXPAYER	PROPERTY TYPE	REAL PROPERTY TAXABLE VALUE	PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXABLE VALUE	TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE
1	CONSUMERS ENERGY COMPANY	UTILITY	\$967,024	\$31,286,800	\$32,253,824
2	C150 2929 HANNAH LOFTS, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$21,354,700	\$375,900	\$21,730,600
3	MERIDIAN MALL, LP	RETAIL	\$15,996,662	\$417,800	\$16,414,462
4	EAST LANSING I, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$14,907,458	\$0	\$14,907,458
5	EAST LANSING ATHLETIC CLUB, INC.	HEALTH CLUB	\$9,679,556	\$1,585,900	\$11,265,456
6	TEG CENTRAL, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$10,294,561	\$0	\$10,294,561
7	BRANDYWINE CREEK II, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$9,021,180	\$0	\$9,021,180
8	TEG CLUB MERIDIAN, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$8,584,372	\$0	\$8,584,372
9	ACC OP, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$8,431,064	\$0	\$8,431,064
10	OKEMOS POINTE I, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$7,941,419	\$0	\$7,941,419

## 2021 VALUE SUMMARY

<b>PROPERTY CLASS</b>	<b>PARCEL COUNT</b>	<b>SEV</b>	<b>TV</b>
Commercial	670	490,322,400	412,320,112
Industrial	41	4,481,000	3,757,071
Residential	13,227	1,681,532,500	1,427,589,370
Personal	1,706	70,840,500	70,840,500
Exempt	356	0	0
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>2,247,176,400</b>	<b>1,914,507,053</b>

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **Defend Tax Appeals with Vigor**

At the end of 2021, there were 13 parcels under appeal in the Entire Tribunal Division of the Michigan Tax Tribunal. Eight appeals were resolved during 2021. The taxable value in contention for pending 2021 appeals is just 0.41 percent of the Township's tax base. Efforts are being made to determine which of the pending cases can be resolved without a trial and which, if any, may need to be defended at trial.

### **Conduct Annual Assessment/Re-Inspection of Taxable Properties**

Although inspections conducted by full-time Assessing Department staff continued for new home construction, etc., the annual re-inspection program involving selected areas of the Township and conducted using intern labor was suspended for 2021 due to the presence of COVID-19 in the community.

## 2021 Board of Review Members

Martha Bashore (alternate)	Diane Galbraith
Xavier Durand-Hollis	Terrance Warren (alternate)
Bertice Ellis	Sonya Pentecost
Deborah Federau	Lanny Brunette

## TEAM MEMBERS

Ashley Winstead, Assessor  
Jennifer Flower, Appraiser II  
Angela Ryan, Appraiser II  
Danielle Hughes, Assessing Clerk

# CLERK'S OFFICE



## RESPONSIBILITIES AND 2021 ACTIVITY

The Clerk's Office responsibilities are largely set by state statute and include but are not limited to; Election Administration, Freedom of Information Coordinator, Record Retention, Township Notices, Fiduciary Responsibilities, updates to the Code of Ordinances, and maintaining official Township Cemetery records. The Clerk's Office also provides free Notary services to the public.

## BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEMBER LISTS

The Clerk's Office maintains and updates the member list for all the Townships Boards and Commissions. Through the collaborative efforts with Township Supervisor Styka, Executive Assistant Michelle Prinz, Clerk's Office staff and Communication's Department staff, the discrepancies with the board and commission membership list and the method for processing public service applications has been addressed.

## CODE OF ORDINANCES -CODIFICATION

The Clerk's Office is responsible for the codification and publication of Township Ordinances. This includes publishing all ordinances internally and with Municipal Code. In 2021, six were sent to Municipal Code for codification. Through collaborative efforts of the Community Planning and Development and Clerk's Office Staff, a shared ordinance numbering system will be implemented in 2022.

## ELECTION ADMINISTRATION AND 2021 ELECTIONS IN MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP

The Clerk's Office is also responsible for preparation, publication and posting of all public notices pertaining to elections, performing public accuracy testing on all tabulators, logistics for all polling locations, processing ballots, and transmitting election data to the County Clerk.

In 2021 the Clerk's office election voting records included:

- Maintained (by hand) Voter Cards (Master Cards) and Voter Identification Cards for 33,139 registered voters. The scanned voter records and Master Cards are updated on a daily basis

- Registered 1,060 new voters and transferred 1,821 voters into the Township
- Updated 9,669 voter records in the voter data base which included 7,794 manual changes.
- Canceled 1,988 voter Master Card records which were digitally scanned and stored, freeing up valuable space and allowing faster voter data retrieval

Meridian Township held one election on May 4, 2021 for the Okemos Public Schools Operating Millage Renewal Proposal.

May 4th – 4,496 registered voters cast their ballot

- 209 residents applied to be added to the permanent absentee voter list increasing the absent voter list to 16,032 residents
- 143 New Voters Registered 14 Days Prior to the Election
- 4,024 Absentee Ballots were issued
- 3,405 Absentee Ballots were returned (84.62%)
- 5 Overseas Ballots were issued
- 191 Absentee Voter Ballots were issued in the Clerk’s Office the Monday prior to Election Day
- 332 Absentee Voter Ballots were issues in the Clerk’s Office on Election Day

The Clerk’s Office restructured some of the polling locations to ensure better spacing for election workers to comply with the Township’s goal of keeping everyone safe and meet ADA compliance. There were four (4) temporary polling location changes. On Election Day, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk visited each polling location and received recommendations from the inspectors and resident for proposed changes to the polling locations for the next election. Polling site inspectors and residents commented that these site visits were not performed by the Clerk’s predecessor.

To prepare for the May Election, the Clerk’s Office had four (4) permanent employees and six (6) temporary employees who worked in the office. For five (5) days, 15 additional inspectors assisted with stuffing the absent voter ballots. On Election Day, 61 election inspectors were at 11 polling locations and 15 election inspectors were participating on the Absent Voter Counting Board. Normally, each polling location is by staff 6-7 inspectors but due to COVID, there were three (3) to four (4) people per polling location. Election workers were supplied with masks, gloves, face shields, and hand sanitizer.

In an effort to address school safety concerns and the layout of the polling locations, staff met with the school administrator at each polling location and the Superintendents for their recommendations for the May election. During these discussions, staff worked with school officials to address relocating the polling locations out of the elementary schools and to eventually move all polling locations out of the schools to address school safety concerns.

A Process Improvement Plan was developed and our election training was revised in 2021 from a Post-Election Audit of the November 2020 Election by the Secretary of State. The Post-Election Audit is a training tool and it was noted that there were 16 areas of discrepancy with the November 2020 Election and recommendations for improvements were offered. Clerk Guthrie implemented an improvement plan which resulted in the May 2021 Post-Election Audit noting only one (1) area of discrepancy which has already been addressed.

### PETITION SIGNATURE VALIDATION PROCESS

On Monday, July 26, 2021 at 3:00 pm, 175 petition sheets were filed with the Meridian Township Clerk’s Office to put a ballot question on the November 2, 2021 election. A supplemental filing was received at 2:00 pm on Tuesday, July 27, 2021. During the preliminary inspection, the petition sheets were visually reviewed for completeness and accuracy by the Clerk’s Office. This inspection was performed while the filer was present. A receipt was signed by the official who received the filing and notarized.

Immediately after completing the preliminary inspection, the voter registration status of each signer was checked to determine if he or she was registered in the jurisdiction named in the heading of the petition on the date that the petition was signed. As quickly as possible following the receipt of the initial filing, the review and final determination was completed by the Meridian Township Clerk's Office at 11:00 am on Wednesday, July 28, 2021.

Each signature on each petition was reviewed, as required, for compliance with Michigan election law. These checks were made using master cards and the Qualified Voter File (QVF). Of the 1,460 petition signatures, our office verified 1,297 valid signatures; exceeding the required number of valid signatures needed (equal to at least 5% of the November 2018 total votes cast for governor in the Township) to place a ballot question on the November 2, 2021 ballot. Our office then submitted the petition to the Township Attorney's.

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOIA)**

The Clerk's Office responded to 79 Freedom of Information requests filed with the Clerk's office during 2021. Although 100+ Police FOIAs come through the Clerk's office, this information is not included in our number since the Police Department has their own logging system for their FOIA requests.

### **LEGAL NOTICES AND POSTING OF OFFICIAL TOWNSHIP MEETINGS AND MINUTES**

The Clerk's Office is tasked with submitting legal notices to the newspaper for publication. Notices are done to meet the Open Meetings Act requirements advising members of the community of upcoming meetings, hearings as well as changes in resolutions and ordinances. Legal notices are submitted to the local paper, posted online and the posted in Township Lobby. Township Board and other boards and commissions minutes are published on the Township website and copies are kept in the Clerk's Office and/or responsible department for the public's inspection. The Clerk's Office submitted 78 legal notices for publication for a total cost of \$8,204.20.

### **NOTARY SERVICES AND OATHS OF OFFICES**

During 2021, the Clerk's office performed 98 notarial services, and 70 oaths of office for public service and police and fire appointments. A majority of area banks and other institutions are cutting back on the types of notary services they are providing to customers which has increased the number of services from our office. This year we adopted Michigan Township's Association's recommendation reappointments that the oath must be taken before performing the duties of the office. The oath of office must be taken whenever one of the officials is originally elected or appointed, and every time the official is reelected or reappointed. This is true for both elected officials and those appointed to fill a vacancy.

Taking the oath tends to lend credibility to the position to which a person has just been appointed or assigned. It also provides an opportunity to create a "paper trail" for the township board to the date of appointment and, therefore, to the expiration date of that person's appointment so the board knows when to make future appointments.

### **TOWNSHIP CEMETERY RECORD KEEPING**

Meridian Township oversees two cemeteries with Glendale cemetery being the most active. In 2021, there were 41 burials, 47 lot sales, 10 re-issued cemetery lot certificates (ownership confirmed) and 22 cemetery lot ownership transfers (ownership confirmed). The recordkeeping management is handled by the Clerk's Office and the grounds maintenance is handled by the Department of Public Works. With the hiring of a new deputy clerk, a review of the current process of record keeping and coordination with the Department of Public Works, staff will be making recommendations for improvements including new software and an assessment of the cemetery rates.

## **TOWNSHIP RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

With the relocation of a majority of the Township department records to the former Haslett Library site, evaluation of the Township's record keeping needs, status, priorities, retention periods, and storage options (both on paper and electronically) is an ongoing process. Emphasis has been placed on continually building efforts to permanently preserve records as well as increase the efficiency through which records may be retrieved. Clerk's staff is currently safeguarding records digitally and with backup documents on external hard drives for all of the boards, commissions and departments documents. As an example in 2021, the Clerk's Office stored 32 sets of Township Board meeting packets, minutes and agendas along with 67 resolutions. Staff is also working with the Archives of Michigan to store the older records permanently.

## **2021 ELECTION COMMISSION**

Clerk Deborah Guthrie  
Trustee Kathy Ann Sundland  
Trustee Courtney Wisinski

## **TEAM MEMBERS**

Deborah Guthrie, Township Clerk  
Robin Faust, Deputy Clerk and Assistant to the Clerk  
Zack Lemaster, Administrative Assistant II  
Rebekah Kelly, Records Technician II

# COMMUNICATIONS



The highest priority of the Communications Department is to provide residents with an increased access to transparency in governance with relevant information in a timely fashion. The Department is responsible for coordinating a strategic and comprehensive effort to inform the public of the Township's goals, plans, activities and events through various multimedia platforms including web, digital and print. The Department ensures that all media and communications successfully reaches their intended audience. Other main functions of the Communications Department includes serving as the Local Franchise Authority for nine Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Channels in Meridian Township, overseeing the operations and production for HOMTV (Government Access Channel) and CAMTV (Public Access Channel), operating a multimedia television internship training program and providing staff support to the Township's Communications Commission.

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **Upgrade and Refresh Township Website**

Industry standard recommends a website should be re-evaluated and revamped every 2-3 years, the previous Township website was launched in 2017. The Township Website Redesign Project initially began in 2020 with an internal audit of website content. In April 2021, the Granicus Project Manager and Communications staff started the Innovator Redesign Implementation Timeline with the Discovery/Consulting Phase of the project. Website traffic tracking utilizing heat maps and analytical data was the baseline for layout and design decisions. The Graphic Design, Development, Content Migration and Soft Launch Phases of the project took several months to complete. The redesigned website was launched and live to the public on November 15. The goal of the website refresh is to strengthen the Township's online presence and includes a new look and experience for site visitors. Added features and modified navigation provides community members with improved functionality and encourage additional use of the Township's online services such as live web forms, online payments and the new Service Finder component. The website remains mobile friendly and responsive. Accessibility enhancements have also been made and will continue to be addressed in the future. The website redesign has been undertaken as part of an existing contract with the Township's website host, Granicus, at minimal cost to the Township. The Communications Department will continue to work on streamlining content and making improvements to the site's navigation into 2022.

### **Implement New Strategic Communications & Marketing Plan**

The Strategic Communications and Marketing Plan was developed as a foundation for all communications and marketing activities and to assist with meeting the needs of the other departments of the Township. The Communications Department has implemented new task management web-based software, ClickUp, to assist with team collaboration efforts, as well as streamline marketing and communications processes. The team continues to work with staff

from multiple departments on planning marketing needs. As part of the new strategic plan, the Department will launch a marketing and communications ticket system in 2022.

### **Expand Branding**

The Communications Team continues to expand Township Branding through the use of branded graphics on social media, branded flyers and a new branded digital newsletter. With the launch of the redesigned Township website, the team also redesigned the Meridian Happenings digital newsletter to have the same look. The team has worked with multiple departments on branded promotional campaigns, including Parks & Recreation, Green Meridian and Economic Development to name a few. The Canva web-based software has been recommended to other departments as a way to collaborate on graphics, signage, etc. A new logo was also created for the Harris Nature Center to incorporate the Township branded colors and the Communications staff is working on a new Farmers' Market logo. Expanding branding both internally and externally is an ongoing process and will continue into 2022.

### **Onboarding Training Videos**

The Communications Department worked with both the Meridian Township Police and Fire Departments to film and produce training videos for staff. Utilizing HOMTV production equipment and editing software, staff recorded a radio system training video with EMS/Training Chief Bill Priese to not only be used for staff within the Meridian Township Fire Department, but for all fire departments in Ingham County. The training video recorded with Police Captain Rick Grillo was a non-escalation and de-escalation customer service training that will be used internally for all Meridian Township employees. Staff will continue to work with the Human Resources Department on recording staff training videos for onboarding of new employees. The goal is to compile a library of training videos that could be utilized within a new Intranet that would be accessible for all employees as a tool of internal communications and onboarding.

### **CAMTV Community Access Channel**

The goal was to re-evaluate the purpose of the CAMTV Community Access Channel and to strengthen programming and participation of community producers. Staff discovered the encoder, which sends the CAMTV signal to AT&T was no longer functioning. In order to comply with the AT&T Franchise Agreement and stream CAMTV to approximately 17 communities on the AT&T U-verse system, it was imperative for an emergency purchase to replace the HD encoder and restore the channel signal. The new encoder was installed in summer 2021. In addition to installing the encoder, staff revised the CAMTV Operating Policies & Procedures Manual, which had not been updated since April 18, 2012. Majority of the changes included updating the technical requirements, omitting obsolete information, adding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) language and mirroring principles from the PBS Editorial Standards and Practices as it pertains to Programming Content Requirements. The Communications Commission approved the changes to the policies at the December 8, 2021 meeting.

### **Investigate & Implement HOMTV Podcast**

To capture additional audiences and increase awareness of HOMTV, staff has been investigating setting up a HOMTV podcast. The first program of the HOMTV podcast will be called "Township Today". The podcast program will cover the biggest topics happening in Meridian Township and include viewpoints from people on both sides of the topics/issues. The software platform to host the podcast has been chosen and HOMTV is working with the company to secure final pricing. HOMTV plans to launch the new podcast with the first program in 2022.

### **HOMTV Server Room Reconfiguration**

Throughout 2021, staff worked with the IT Department and a local engineer on reconfiguring the HOMTV Server Room. Training was also included in this project on the workflow and troubleshooting of equipment. Old equipment and approximately 52 cables that were no longer



needed were removed from the racks in the HOMTV Server Room to make way for new equipment and/or proper equipment maintenance. Progress has been made after unnecessary equipment was removed and remaining cables were properly coiled. The equipment that was removed was recycled and any equipment not recycled will be sold. In 2022, staff will continue to remove old equipment and cables, as well as label them properly and create new schematics for the updated station operations workflow.

### **Digital Conversion into HOMTV Video Archive System**

The HOMTV Video Archive Project was relaunched in 2021 after a pause in 2020 due to staff changes. New equipment was purchased to properly convert DVDs and VHS tapes into a digital format. The archiving progress was restructured to archive the data more efficiently. Instead of ingesting more footage into the EditShare system, it was decided the best approach would be to enter the metadata for shows already in the EditShare system. This means that staff goes through and labels who appears in each episode, the date it aired, who crewed the episode and any other pertinent information that should be logged. To date, staff has completed entering metadata for 36 episodes of Beyond the Badge, 116 episodes of All Access Sports and 57 episodes of Open Line. Once the metadata is finished for all existing shows in EditShare, then staff will continue with the digitization of tapes, DVDs, etc. In addition to that, staff has also cleaned up the EditShare system. This includes deleting files no longer needed and reorganizing how files are stored and what folders they belong to. Staff has also trained 3 interns on how to enter metadata and the process for tracking the project's progress. Each show has a spreadsheet that categorize the episodes by year. Each column shows the episode number, the date and the runtime. Once staff has finished entering the metadata for an episode, it is highlighted in pink to signify its completion. The digital conversion into the HOMTV Video Archive System is making progress, but will be an ongoing project in the coming years.

### **Additional HOMTV Revenue Sources**

The Communications team launched two t-shirt fundraisers to generate additional revenue for HOMTV and the department. Through the use of [bonfire.com](https://bonfire.com), the team set up two separate t-shirt fundraisers; one for the community - HOMTV Proud Supporter and the other for HOMTV Alumni - HOMie4life. Supporters can select their item and color and the team receives a kickback for every item purchased. Staff will continue seeking additional revenue sources for HOMTV including encouraging HOMTV Alumni members to give back to current HOMTV interns.

### **Marketing Analytics**

The Communications Department oversees the content development and engagement of 2 websites and 21 different social media accounts across multiple platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube and Nextdoor. Nextdoor is the newest platform, added in June 2019, but has generated the greatest reach. The team continues to analyze each platform's content and community engagement.

### **Website Performance Summary**

- **Meridian Township Website Traffic 2021** - The Meridian Township website saw 3.6 million page views in 2021, compared to 884,451 page views in 2020. Send by GovDelivery is the new service used through Granicus to provide eNotification emails to Township website users who subscribed to website updates. There are 559 subscribers. The Township sends approximately 50 bulletins via per month. Those notifications receive a 93.9% engagement rate of people opening the email or clicking on the links in the email.
- **HOMTV Website Traffic 2021** - HOMTV.net saw 71,831 page views in 2021 with 33,159 users visiting the site. According to the HOMTV website add-on app called AddThis, 15,000 visitors to the HOMTV website are from direct

searches, 11,000 from referring domains and 6,400 from social sources. The largest referring domain for HOMTV's website came from Google while the top social source came from Facebook.

### **Social Media Performance Summary**

During 2021, staff continued to monitor the social platforms for content engagement; posting content and information that the community could relate to. Staff is also looking at the type of content to post to the different platforms rather than posting the same content on all platforms. The Communications Department has so many outlets to share information that not all content has to be posted to social media. In October 2021, the team's social media scheduling software added a scheduling planner, which recommends the best time to post according to trends and history.

- **Facebook** – The Communications Team manages seven Facebook pages for the Township with direct responsibility over Meridian Township, HOMTV and CAMTV pages, and indirect responsibility for the other six, which consist of the Fire Department, Parks & Recreation, Farmers' Market, Harris Nature Center pages. Meridian Township's total Facebook likes year-end 2021 equaled 6,855 with an increase of 478 likes compared to year-end (this number may be higher as a result of Facebook moving from "Likes" to "Followers"). Total Facebook followers year-end 2021 equaled 7.5K. HOMTV's total Facebook likes year-end 2021 equaled 2,171 with an increase of 137 likes compared to year-end 2020 (this number may be higher due to Facebook switching from "Likes" to "Followers"). Total Facebook followers year-end 2021 equaled 2.4K
- **Twitter** – The Communications Team manages only two Twitter accounts: one for the Township and one for HOMTV. Meridian Township's Total Twitter followers year-end 2021 equaled 3,187. HOMTV's Total Twitter followers for year-end 2021 equaled 1,784.
- **Instagram** – The Communications Team manages two Instagram accounts: one for the Township and one for HOMTV and assists with the Harris Nature Center and Farmers' Market accounts. Meridian Township's total Instagram followers year-end 2021 equaled 1901, an increase of 255 over year-end 2020. HOMTV's total Instagram followers year-end 2021 equaled 474, which is an increase of 75 over year-end 2020.
- **LinkedIn** – The Communications Team manages a LinkedIn account for Meridian Township and HOMTV. Meridian Township's total LinkedIn followers year-end 2021 equaled 586, an increase of 72 new followers compared to 2020. HOMTV's total LinkedIn followers year-end 2021 equaled 1204, an increase of 11 new followers compared to 2020.
- **NextDoor** – This is the team's greatest performing platform with the greatest reach to the community. Total members from the community at year-end 2021 equaled 11,482 out of 22,355 households in the Township. An increase of 1,612 residents that have joined Nextdoor since 2020.
- **YouTube** – Staff manages two YouTube channels: one for HOMTV and one for the Township. HOMTV's total video views for year-end 2021 equaled 1,718. Total subscribers year-end 2021 equaled 505, which is an increase of 121

compared to year-end 2020. Due to the increased virtual offerings by multiple Township Departments, the Meridian Township YouTube Channel has been reactivated. Total video views for year-end 2021 equaled 306. Total subscribers year-end 2021 equaled 309, which is an increase of 215 compared to year-end 2020.

- **Constant Contact** – The Communications Team sends out a weekly e-Newsletter, Meridian Happenings, using Constant Contact. In November 2021, the team launched a new branded design of the newsletter. Currently, we have 10.5K contacts with an open rate of 52%, while the industry average is 24%. This percent remains high because the newsletter is shared on our social platforms and sent to contacts that have stated they want to receive information about the Township. The newsletter is our second best means of communicating information to residents.

### **Print & Fundraising Summary**

- **Prime Meridian Magazine** – The 2021 edition of the Prime Meridian Magazine publication was produced and arrived in homes in the spring. Due to costs associated with printing and mailing, the Prime Meridian Magazine will be an annual publication moving forward. Additional marketing materials in a digital format will supplement the magazine content throughout the year.
- **Township Flyers** – Staff continues to create flyers for events, entrance doors and restroom doors as a way to reach more people about Township information and events through foot-traffic.
- **Fundraisers** - A new fundraiser for Meridian Cares began in March 2021. Staff designed a t-shirt with the Meridian Cares logo and promoted to the community, Township staff, and Township Board and Commission members to purchase in support of the Meridian Cares program. To date, the t-shirt fundraiser through Bonfire has raised \$595.57. Meridian Cares shopping bags were also designed and sold at the Meridian Township Farmers' Market. Staff continues to assist with promotional efforts for other Meridian Cares events and fundraisers, including the annual Coat Drive, No Shave November, Holiday Giving Tree and Holiday Food Baskets.

### **HOMTV Programming**

HOMTV produced and aired a total of 60 regular programs, 75 live Township meetings (many held virtually via Zoom or in a hybrid format) and over 500 stories, social media videos and promos in 2021. Each month, HOMTV expanded program offerings on the channel of both returning and new shows including: All About Animals, Your Choice 2021 May Special Election Coverage, Meet Your Elected Officials, Summer Concert Series, HOM Entertainment, Back to School Series, Dear Santa and Virtual View. HOMTV provided live event coverage of the Township's Police Investigation Press Conference, Election Risk-Limiting Audit, MDOT Public Meeting on the M-43 (Grand River Avenue) Project and Art Sculpture Reveal & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. In February 2021, HOMTV also hosted a Virtual Intern Appreciation and Golden Tape Awards Ceremony to celebrate the commitment and hard work of the 2020 HOMTV Interns. The ceremony keynote speaker was an alumni member who was a reporter in Guam. Conducting the event via Zoom allowed for this alumni member to take part in the celebration.

### **CAMTV Programming**

CAMTV currently has a total of 7 programs and 5 active producers who are creating content to air on CAMTV. In 2021, 50 different episodes were aired on the channel. Additional marketing efforts will take place at the start of 2022 to add more producers and create digital marketing for the channel.

### **HOMTV Internship Program**

Twenty-six (26) interns participated in HOMTV's multimedia television internship program in 2021. The interns contributed approximately 9,000 hours producing approximately 500 online articles and more than 500 videos. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, some of the internship program was completed virtually or in a hybrid format. However, the interns were still able to get some hands-on experience and training in person in the HOMTV facilities. This included crewing and anchoring multiple Meridian News Now shows, interview programs, live meetings and event coverage.

### **Awards**

In 2021, HOMTV received two national awards and one regional award. The Alliance for Community Media (ACM) recognized HOMTV as a 1st place national award winner in the 2021 Hometown Media Awards Competition. For four years in a row, HOMTV has received the "Overall Excellence in Governmental Access" award from ACM. This year was in the \$300,000 - \$600,000 budget-based division. The Overall Excellence awards recognize access organizations for their overall operational activities and programming efforts. The National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) awarded HOMTV a national first place award in the 2021 Government Programming Awards for the Meridian Live Coverage of the November 17, 2020 Township Board Meeting in the "Public/Community Meetings" category. The Government Programming Awards recognize excellence in broadcast, cable, multimedia and electronic programming produced by local government agencies. HOMTV also received a Finalist recognition from the ACM Central States Regional Philo Festival of Media Arts in the "Professional Documentary" category for the First Female Eagle Scouts: Troop 164 Special Feature. The ACM Central States Region includes stations in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

### **MEMBERS OF THE CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION IN 2021**

Tunga Kiyak, Chair  
Walter Benenson, Vice Chair  
Leslie Charles, Commissioner  
Mike Nevells, Commissioner  
Brian Seipel, Commissioner  
Vacant, Alternate Commissioner  
Rita Adhi, Alternate Commissioner  
Deborah Guthrie, Township Board Liaison

### **TEAM MEMBERS**

Brandie Yates, Communications Manager  
Andrea Smiley, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist  
Samantha Diehl, Multimedia Production & Operations Specialist

# COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Despite the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021 was one of the busiest years on record for the Department of Community Planning and Development. The Department continued to provide excellent public service to the community through building permits and inspections, site plan review, public engagement and education, code enforcement, and rental housing inspections. The Department works closely with residents, businesses, property owners, and provides Staff support to the following Boards and Commissions:

- ✓ Township Board
- ✓ Planning Commission
- ✓ Zoning Board of Appeals
- ✓ Transportation Commission
- ✓ Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- ✓ Building Board of Appeals

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **Serve as an active partner in redeveloping the Village of Okemos and Downtown Haslett.**

The Village of Okemos project had two minor amendments to their MUPUD approved by Staff in 2021. The plans continue to evolve towards construction and Staff is expecting site plans submittal in late January. The Downtown Haslett plans also underwent a minor amendment to their MUPUD approval. The site plan for that project has been approved and Staff is expecting a building permit submittal in the next couple of months. Along with the Neighborhoods and Economic Development Director, Staff continues to meet regularly with the development teams for both projects, in an effort to move these two redevelopment opportunities forward.

### **Finalize the draft of the Form Based Code for the western portion of Grand River Avenue.**

The Planning Commission and Township Board have been discussing this concept for several years. Although no major progress has been made this year, Staff is currently analyzing how to move this forward or if there are alternatives that will get us to the same end goal of higher quality development in the West Grand River Avenue corridor.

### **Begin the review of the Future Land Use Map as part of the overall review and possible update to the Master Plan.**

The Master Plan for the Township will begin in 2022, five years after the adoption of our current plan and consistent with the State enabling legislation. Staff is recommending slightly reworking this goal for the Planning Commission to focus on in 2022. By focusing on the existing land use, the Planning Commission can determine areas that need to be studied further

and wait for public input to talk about the Future Land Use in the Township.

**Revise the sign ordinance so that it is content neutral.**

Staff has started work on this major ordinance overhaul, with a 50% draft having been circulated to the Planning Commission subcommittee working on this item. We expect to finalize the language this winter for the Planning Commission and Township Board's review and ultimate adoption.

**Continue to assist the Planning Commission with the review of the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Ordinance.**

The overhaul of this ordinance, which has been discussed for years and has been under active review for over 12 months, was completed late in 2021. The Township Board adopted the proposed changes and Staff has already had conversations with potential developers that proposed to utilize the ordinance. This was a monumental overhaul to the Township's zoning ordinance structure.

**Provide the Rental Housing Inspectors with tablets and create an interactive inspection checklist to streamline inspection reporting.**

The rental inspectors will be on tablets in the near future, as our focus initially was getting tablets for the building inspectors. The checklist has been created and is being used as a hard copy, pending making it digital in BS&A. We plan to make this transition complete in 2022.

**Evaluate the need for an additional Rental Housing Inspector.**

After some staff changes, a request was made to the Township Manager to convert one of the part time rental inspectors over to a full-time role. This was granted and we have filled the role. We are now using this additional manpower to catch up on inspections that have been postponed or delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Provide the Building Inspectors with laptops to better facilitate working, communicating, and meeting remotely.**

The Building inspectors have been outfitted with tablets, which have made entering inspection results and following up on issues much easier. We will continue to utilize technology as best we can to improve our operations.

**Continue the discussion with the City of Mason to provide increased building services and evaluate the cost and staffing needed for the Township to provide additional services.**

In the summer, Staff from Mason and Meridian Township finalized a new building services contract outlining the terms of the service that we provide to Mason. After legal review, both communities adopted the new contract and we are currently operating under it. Both parties agreed that we will hold costs the same at this time, but reevaluate in the upcoming years.

**Work with the City of East Lansing on improvements to scheduling, reporting inspection results, and communication relating to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing permits.**

In late summer, Staff from East Lansing and Meridian Township came together for an 'all hands' meeting to discuss our processes and how to improve them. As a result of that meeting, we were able to fix a long-standing issue with reporting inspection results, which has substantially improved our customer service. East Lansing is currently hiring a new plumbing inspector, but the East Lansing Building Official worked with us to ensure that there was no gap in coverage and we have navigated COVID-19 fueled inspection cancelations effectively.

**Continue to monitor and update permit applications used by the Department.**

Staff was unable to take a deep dive into this goal, due to the Staff changes that hit the Department. We plan on carrying this over to the 2022 goals, with the addition of reviewing our full fee structure as well.

## 2021 COMMISSION AND BOARD MEMBERS

(\* indicates former member)

### PLANNING COMMISSION

Scott Hendrickson, Chair  
Peter Trezise, Vice-Chair  
Jerry Richards, Secretary  
David Premoe  
Holly Cordill

Alisande Shrewsbury  
Bill McConnell  
Mark Blumer  
Christina Snyder

The Planning Commission had a busy year in 2021. Public Hearings were held and recommendations made on five different rezoning requests and ten Special Use Permit requests. These included the major redevelopment at Kansas and Jolly Road for the new Sparrow Health standalone Emergency Room and the new Consumers Credit Union building in front of Hobby Lobby on Grand River Avenue. Additionally, the Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval on two text amendments, one of which was a complete overhaul of the MUPUD ordinance, which was the culmination of a year's worth of work by Staff and the Commission.

### ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Alexia Mansour, Chair  
Monique Field-Foster, Vice-Chair  
Dan Opsommer, Township Board Representative  
Scott Hendrickson, Planning Commission Representative

\*Don Kulhanek  
\*Alex Newman  
\*Brian Shorkey

The Zoning Board of Appeals heard a total of 15 different requests in 2021. Four were existing commercial structures, four were for new construction of commercial structures, and the remaining seven were existing residential homes where changes were being sought. The Board also recognized that there were some requests that had become reoccurring and have asked Staff to propose ordinance amendments to address some of these concerns in 2022.

### TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Steven Vagnozzi, Chair  
Bob Lovell, Vice-Chair  
Dan Opsommer, Township Board Representative  
Joyce Van Coevering

Karla Hudson  
Tim Potter  
Joshua Robertson

The Transportation Commission met jointly with the East Lansing Transportation Commission regarding the Towar and Lake Lansing intersection reconstruction that is coming in the Ingham County Road Department's budget. They approved a resolution regarding the non-motorized access for the site and will continue to work with East Lansing on the project in 2022. The Commission discussed extensively the coming work to Okemos Road and Grand River Avenue and will continue these conversations before construction begins in 2022. They also approved a resolution in support of the MSU to Lake Lansing pathway extension that is coming in 2022. Overall, the Commission has taken every opportunity to support non-motorized access throughout the Township and will continue to do so moving forward.

### BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Jeff Theuer, Chair  
James E. Jackson, Vice-Chair  
Brenda Chapman

Joyce Van Coevering  
Frank L. Walsh  
John Matuszak

David Premoe

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority issued the first reimbursement payments for the first Phase of the Elevation at Okemos Point project. Construction began on the Haslett Marathon project, which was approved in 2020, for a Brownfield. Additionally, construction is progressing on the 2360 Jolly Road project, with reimbursements expected to begin in 2022.

### **BUILDING BOARD OF APPEALS**

Charles Wallin  
Pete Potterpin  
David Premoe

The Building Board of Appeals did not need to meet in 2021, but stands ready should make building code issues arise in the year to come.

### **TEAM MEMBERS**

(\* indicates staff person left position in 2021)

Timothy R. Schmitt, AICP, Director of Community Planning and Development  
John Heckaman, Chief Building Inspector  
Debbie Budzynski, Administrative Assistant II  
Ron Rau, Senior Building Inspector  
John Hines, Senior Building Inspector  
Frank Christmas, Rental Housing Inspector  
Joe Wade, Rental Housing Inspector  
Zachary Fenner, Code Enforcement Officer  
Keith Chapman, Assistant Planner  
Brian Shorkey, AICP, Senior Planner

\* John Martin, Building Inspector

\*Kevin Reed, Rental Housing Inspector

\*Peter Menser, Principal Planner

\*Mark Kieselbach, Director of Community Planning and Development

\*DeKeea Quinney-Davis, Administrative Assistant I



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **Potential Intensity Change Area (PICA) Redevelopment**

Meridian Township's Economic Development vision to support the redevelopment of our Potential Intensity Change Areas (PICA's) remained the priority in 2021. The Okemos PICA, designated at the intersections of Okemos/Hamilton and through the Downtown Development Authority, is actively pursuing a major redevelopment first approved in 2018. Mitigating financial costs have delayed the project brought to us by the "Village of Okemos LLC" team. At the beginning of 2021, the Meridian Township Board worked with the developer to remove the blight that existed on the properties to propel the project forward. Working alongside the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), we may see the project through to site plan approval. The project is eligible for Brownfield Development reimbursement, Downtown Development reimbursement and local funding from the Meridian Redevelopment Fund. The Township has met every responsibility to the developer for the project as approved. The next steps lie with the developer to meet the Township's requirements for site plan approval, applications to the Brownfield and Downtown Development Authorities along with various other funding mechanisms for construction to begin. The expectation is for a fully commercialized corridor on Hamilton Road supported by the residents of the two blocks. 200 residential units should create 3 full-time jobs for leasing, maintenance and property management. Also, additional full-time positions as retailers and leases take over boutique spaces.

The Haslett PICA, designated at the intersections of Haslett/Marsh Roads, has also seen an extreme delay in progress for the approved Pine Village redevelopment at 1673 Haslett Road. Pine Village is a 55+ independent senior community complex with an approved mixed-use planned unit development approved for the site. Approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of non-residential space will occupy the first floor with three additional stories above the first floor for residents of Pine Village. The site will include a pathway connection to the interurban and other amenities to support independent living at a centralized location. Pine Village saw delays connected with COVID-19 and the cost of construction. The project has an approved Brownfield reimbursement to clean up long-standing contamination at the site. We anticipate demolition in the first quarter of 2022 to lead the way for vertical construction activities in late summer. These projected start dates are heavily related to weather and availability of labor. 149 units for an independent facility like this should support 3-4 full-time positions. Varying positions to support residents like transportation, food service, and other activities.

The Haslett Marathon successfully completed demolition of the old gas tanks and of service station building through a phased demolition. COVID-19 is a standard in our lives now; in order to maintain staff for as long as possible, the Township worked with the developer to allow for demolition and construction to occur simultaneously at the site. Some residents voiced initial opposition to the new rehabilitated site due to its proximity to the road, the height of the building and their perception of its impact on traffic. Much of the Marathon building shell is complete with windows and doors recently installed. Full time staff will be maintained at this location. A mechanic, front staff and additional part time staff are expected. A great update to property in Haslett, one of the first in over 30 years.

**Downtown Development Authority**

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of Meridian Township, referred to by many as “downtown Okemos” holds nostalgia for some in the community. Others are eager to see a thriving and bustling commercial area where people can see and be seen. One major stint in the growth of the DDA was a debt owed to the Township for streetlights and the loss of a tax tribunal in 2012. In May 2021, a unanimous vote of support from the Township Board forgave the remaining \$125,000 debt. The DDA now unsaddled with a monthly payment can invest their established dollars into the businesses in the district. The forgiveness of the debt propelled the DDA body a decade into the future by relieving them of the additional cost. The DDA is now considering the creation of programs to support “Match on Main” or other incentivizing programs for small businesses.

**Meridian Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)**

Members of the Meridian EDC expressed several targeted goals for 2021 to support the Township. Our first action was in response to COVID-19 for the second round of small business grants issued by the EDC. Small businesses that met the eligibility criteria were awarded up to \$7,000 to support their establishments through the pandemic shutdown. The Meridian Redevelopment Fund, a fund created from the proceeds of the sale of the MARC building, were used to support the issuance of grants for eligible approved applicants. A selection committee of Township Board Members, Township Manager, and Economic Department Staff reviewed each application. The Meridian EDC is proud of its collaborative efforts to support our small business community.

In 2021, the Meridian EDC included the “Meridian Motorfest”, the first annual car show hosted at High Caliber Karting at Meridian Mall, as a part of our annual community celebrations. The 2021 community survey commissioned by the Township saw an outcry from the public for more activities and engagement. The Meridian EDC also supported additional funding for the LEAP Public Art Communities Grant to commission “Sow” our newest community art piece at Marketplace on the Green. The \$5,000 supported the installation and finishing’s for the piece.

It was also the priority of the Meridian EDC to launch the first Freedom Fest, Meridian Township Juneteenth celebration. Juneteenth in the past was a celebration hosted by black organizations nationwide. In 2005, Governor Granholm designated Juneteenth a holiday in Michigan. At that time, many communities in the State began hosting community celebrations to honor the true end of slavery in America. In 2021, the federal government declared Juneteenth a National Independence Day, a federal holiday for us all. The Meridian EDC was overjoyed we had already planned a community scavenger hunt to bring general awareness of the holiday and its importance to the story of America.

**Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)**

The Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) prioritized its focus to implement a vision for the Grand River Corridor in 2021. This commission, established in 2017, concentrates on what improvements can be instituted on Grand River Avenue to make it easier to traverse regardless of what mode of transportation you use. Grand River Avenue has the highest density and traffic in our community. This corridor is predominantly commercial retail and the CIA has the direction to incentivize its future as a walkable corridor. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) notified the Township of its

plans for the reconstruction of M-43 Grand River Avenue in 2022. The CIA alongside the Transportation Commission engaged with MDOT with a request for updates to be made to M-43 during this reconstruction project. MDOT agreed to the installation of three pedestrian crossings along Grand River Avenue. The construction project will fall on an 18-month cycle and will include coordination between MDOT and the Ingham County Drain office as updates to the Meijer and Grettenberger drains are made. The installation of the crosswalks will occur as construction phases occur, with the eastern portion of M-43 completed first. The crosswalks will be located 4900, 2900, and 1800 blocks of Grand River Avenue in the median of the 5 lane road.

The redevelopment of 2010 W Grand River from Burger King to Buddy's Pizza is a long-awaited project. The start and stop of the pandemic, changes to the site plan, and increased requirements of the Drain Office were the only incremental setbacks to this project. An impact to the restaurant industry besides equipment (typically ordering specialized items like coolers, appliances, etc.) is the availability of labor. This will impact the opening of this and other like establishments. Buddy Pizza should support 3-4 full time positions.

**New Businesses**

Meridian is a Prime community. Ranked number 1 by Niche Magazine in 2021 by size and sheer magnitude of excellence. It is not just numbers that make Meridian a celebrated and sought after community. The care, quality and quantity of our Parks. The high functioning local schools and the financial stability of Meridian combined, is a reason for the 10% increase in population in a decade. Meridian welcomed 40 new single families to the community with the addition of the single family homes. Meridian also welcomed 11 new businesses with a ribbon cutting or promotional event. These services we offer free of charge to any new or expanding business in the Township. Our smart attitude toward small business support and efficient development is what makes Meridian a prime community for development.

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Renee Korrey, Chair  
Peter Campbell, Secretary/Treasurer  
Bill Cawood  
Sue Fulk, Vice-Chair  
Ronald J. Styka, Township Supervisor

James Spanos  
Will Randle  
Scott Weaver  
James Raynak  
Thomas Stanko

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Kim Thompson, Chair  
Phil Deschaine, Township Treasurer, Ex-Officio  
Kathy Sundland, Township Board Liaison  
Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager/Secretary  
Shawn Dunham  
Brenda Chapman, Vice-Chair

Dave Ledebuhr  
Mikhail Murshak  
Tom Conway  
Adam Carlson  
Joel Conn

**CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY**

Chris Nugent  
Ron Styka, Township Supervisor  
Barry Goetz  
Jeff Ross, Vice-Chair

Kellie Johnson  
Bruce Peffers  
Chris Rigterink  
Eric Foster, Chair

## TEAM MEMBERS

Amber Clark, Economic Development & Neighborhoods Director  
Michelle Prinz, Executive Assistant

# FIRE/EMS



Station 93 - Engine, Ladder, Ambulance, Rescue Water, Safety Trailer, District 1 Mass Casualty Trailer, "Jaws of Life"



Station 91-ALS Engine, Ambulance, Command Vehicle, Reserve Ambulance, Ambulance Engine Carries "Jaws of Life", Rescue (confined space, water rescue)



Station 92-Engine, Ambulance, Boat, "Jaws of Life"

*Serving our community with Pride, Integrity and Professionalism since 1929.*

It is my honor and privilege to serve the residents, employees, Manager, and Board of Meridian Township as their Fire Chief, working alongside 36 well-trained and highly skilled professional firefighters, fire officers and administrative staff members. Together, we provide high-quality emergency, prevention and risk-reduction, education and emergency response to more than 43,000 residents within our 32 square-mile response area. We are pleased to present our 2021 Annual Report.

While the role of the fire service has significantly changed and increased in complexity over the years, our commitment to serving the community to the best of our ability remains steadfast and focused. Meridian Township is a highly diverse community, and your Fire Department team is a dedicated group of professionals who consistently provide exceptional service.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Township Board, Manager, union leadership and employees of the Township for their collaboration and willingness to work for the long-term good of the Township and the residents we serve. This continual cooperation supports our ability to provide the best possible services. We continually evaluate and maintain a strong fiscal position to create a fiscally sustainable path forward that supports our ability to enhance the delivery of essential emergency and risk reduction services.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge our community. We are blessed to have incredibly strong support from the community, and we do not take this support for granted.

## OUR MISSION

Each year the Fire Department evaluates its programs and service delivery models to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency, but more importantly, to ensure it can meet the emergency service, prevention and risk-reduction needs of the Township.

- Our mission is to provide efficient, dependable and professional services to the residents of Meridian Township.
- Our values are to educate and provide caring, compassionate service with excellence and dignity.

- *Our vision* is to exceed the expectations of the community by proactively responding to the established priorities and needs.

The Meridian Township Fire Department (MTFD) is a full-service organization providing fire, rescue and emergency medical services to a community of 43,916 residents across 32 square miles. Three stations are strategically located to provide timely responses to residents and visitors alike. Three dual-paramedic staffed advanced life support ambulances deliver emergency medical care at the highest pre-hospital level. The Department also provides fire prevention, code enforcement, plan review and fire safety related programming. The Department is an active member of the Metro-Lansing Technical Rescue and Hazardous Materials Teams. These teams respond to high-risk, low-frequency incidents involving confined spaces, trenches, bodies of water, high/low angle rescues, chemical/gas releases and structural collapses. Each department member is committed to serving the community with excellence through the delivery of outstanding customer service.

Over the past two years, the Department has learned the importance of adaptability and flexibility to meet the needs of its firefighters, the Township and residents while maneuvering through the challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced call volume by an estimated 10%; however, in 2021 the total call volume was 13.8% higher than 2020 and 2.8% higher than 2019. Additionally, EMS calls in 2021 (4627) increased by 18.4% over 2020 and 9.7% over 2019.

### **Fire Prevention**

The Fire Marshal is dedicated to the goal of reducing the number and impact of fire-related incidents within the Township of Meridian. This is accomplished through a comprehensive fire inspection program, plan review, testing of new construction and fire protection systems, and investigation of all fires that occur within the Township. The Fire Marshal is also invested and involved in the fire and life safety education programs that are provided by the department.

Fire inspections are conducted in businesses on an annual basis. Scheduling is based on the risk posed by the building's occupants or operation (for example, a restaurant or theater has a greater inherent risk than a physician's office). These inspections are based on adopted codes and Township ordinances.

The Fire Marshal conducts plan reviews of new construction site plans to ensure compliance with fire safety codes. This includes fire access, fire hydrants, sprinkler systems, fire alarms, location of fire department connections and any other issues which could affect fire department response.

The Fire Marshal investigates all fires and explosions for the purpose of establishing cause and origin. Fires are classified in one of four ways: accidental, incendiary, natural and undetermined. An accidental fire is a fire in which the cause does not involve an intentional human act to ignite or spread fire into an area where the fire should not be. Conversely, an intentional fire is a fire that is caused by an intentional human act to ignite fire where it should not be. A natural fire is caused without direct human intervention, and an undetermined fire is where the fire's cause cannot be proven to an acceptable level of certainty.

In 2021, the Fire Marshal completed 64 plan reviews of construction projects, 75 fire inspections, 57 fire alarm inspections, and 71 fire sprinkler inspections. Additionally, 24 fire investigations in the Township and four additional supporting our mutual aid partners.

### **Training**

The Training Division has many charges. Foremost among these is the continual facilitation of the

ongoing training needs of the second busiest fire department in Ingham County. All firefighters are dually trained in emergency medicine and firefighting. All employees are state licensed paramedics and subject to strict training requirements outlined by the State of Michigan. Firefighters are held to state-mandated standards in highly technical areas, each with their associated training requirements. Some areas of training include firefighting tactics and strategy, emergency driving, hazardous materials, ice and water rescue, extrication, confined space operations and medical care for the sick and injured.

Training was conducted this year despite the coronavirus still having a grasp on society and affecting the ways the department could interact with each other. The Fire Department completed over 3,100 hours of training collectively in-person and online. Team members worked with four probationary members who are currently in the process of completing their probationary training objectives and a fifth firefighter/paramedic who successfully completed all probationary objectives in 2021. Probationary objectives take 120+ hours to complete. All staff members completed training in the following areas:

- Cultural Competency Training
- New Ingham County Wide Radio System
- Hazardous Communications
- Back Injury Prevention
- HIPAA
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Ice Water Rescue Training
- Active Violence Incident Response
- MS4 Stormwater Protection Training
- Hydrant Connections
- Ladders
- Vehicle Extrication
- Apparatus Driving
- SCBA

Many team members received training in Pediatric Medication Administration, Emergency Vehicle Driving, Pediatrics, Patient Care Reports, and other EMS & Fire topics. Eight people completed Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS). Three members completed Fire Inspector Training which was one week in length and required many hours of studying. Twelve team members successfully renewed their paramedic licenses and completed Tri-County testing. Team members continued to train in incident command utilizing the Blue Card Command System.

The EMS/Training Division secured a state trauma grant in the amount of \$3,850 which paid for new traffic safety vests and pelvic splints for each medical unit. The Citizens Assistance Program served six residents with obtaining Meals on Wheels, gaining financial assistance, and accessing additional medical assistance. The First Responder COVID-19 Testing Program continued to be utilized by over 400 first responders to date and is still actively engaged with first responders. The department worked in conjunction with other METRO departments to complete live firefighting drills at a vacant Burger King. This training provided simulated fire conditions for crews to make entry and complete fire control, search and rescue of victims and command and control of the fire scene. Training and full implementation was completed for a new emergency radio system that covers the entire county. The Training Division continued to train Harris Nature Center Staff in CPR & First Aid, as well as, provide continuing education to Meridian Township Police Department.

## **Fire Operations**

The Operations subdivision is composed of shift operations and broken down into individual firefighting and EMS companies which perform the day-to-day public safety activities for Meridian Township. The members that comprise Operations are divided into two shifts (Red and Black) and work a 24-hour on/24-hour off/24-hour on/72-hour off shift. A Battalion Chief fulfills the role of Shift Commander and supervises each shift. The Shift Commanders handle daily staffing issues and the scheduling of training and other activities for their shift. They also act as the liaison between the shift

and the Fire Administration. The Battalion Chiefs are responsible for command and control of most emergency incidents in the Township.

The Township fire districts are geographically divided into three districts each containing one fire station. The three fire stations are strategically located to support quicker response. Each station has an ambulance and fire engine. The department also has a ladder truck and other specialized response vehicles.

Each individual fire company is made up of a Company Officer (usually a Lieutenant) who supervises two Firefighter/Medics. The Company Officer is responsible for the supervision and safety of the company members assigned to them at all times. The Company Officer is also responsible for all reports and communications relating to the operation of their company.

2021 demonstrated once again that Meridian Township Fire did much more than respond to emergency medical calls and residential structure fires. We are an all-hazards fire department that also responds to significant motor vehicle accidents and a variety of rescues and fires that present unusual hazards for the community. While responding to emergencies is the priority of the Operations Division, personnel also spend their time completing required training classes, conducting station tours for the public and maintaining the stations, apparatus and equipment. In 2021, this was all completed with the added challenge of keeping the community and crews safe while in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.

Below is a table showing total fire and EMS incidents over a ten-year period from 2012-2021 (Fig. 1). Figures 2 and 3 show the number of fire (Fig. 2) and medical (Fig. 3) calls Meridian Township Fire Department responded to in 2021 categorized by dispatch type. The final chart compares total EMS calls by month in 2020 and 2021 (Fig. 4).

<b>10 Year Incident Count-Fig 1</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Fire Incidents</b>	<b>EMS Incidents</b>	<b>Total Incidents</b>
2012	600	3,847	4,447
2013	737	3,619	4,356
2014	714	3,683	4,397
2015	623	3,884	4,507
2016	925	4,028	4,953
2017	1,181	3,988	5,169
2018	991	4,226	5,217
2019	1217	4,220	5,437
2020	875	4031	4906
<b>2021</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>5590</b>

<b>Confirmed Fire Responses Dispatch Type-Fig 2</b>	
HAMIN – Hazmat	3
FBURN – Illegal burns	36
FSTRUC – Residential Structure fire	73



FMAJOR – Commercial Building fire	4
FSTILL – Smoke Investigation	58
FALARMS – Fire Alarms	324
FBRUCH – Brush Fire	25
CAR/ Dumpster fire	124
UTILF – Utility Poll fire / wires down	72
Stuck in elevator	4

**Medical Responses Dispatch Type-Fig 3**

MED - Start EMD	1346
MEDIC – Medical response	362
MEDICA – Alpha response	708
MEDICB – Bravo response	233
MEDICC – Charlie response	656
MEDICD – Delta response	610
MEDICE – Echo response	50
PIACCF – Injury Accident	130
CITAST – Fallen and can't get up	432
DROWN – Lake or river	2
PINNIN vehicle accident	20
UNKACCF – Unknown Injury accident	32
MUTAMB – Mutual Aid medical	367
SHOOTF – Med/Fire response	1

<b>EMS Calls by Month</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>January</b>	385	416
<b>February</b>	351	364
<b>March</b>	329	449
<b>April</b>	234	398
<b>May</b>	270	479
<b>June</b>	281	486
<b>July</b>	312	479
<b>August</b>	326	496
<b>September</b>	336	518
<b>October</b>	343	542
<b>November</b>	348	477
<b>December</b>	331	485

Fig. 4

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **Outdoor Warning Sirens**

In 2021, MTFD continued the project to install emergency warning sirens throughout the Township protecting residents from severe weather and other emergencies. The year 2021 marked tenth siren installed near Lake Lansing and Park Lake roads. In 2022 an eleventh, outdoor warning siren will be installed in the area of Tihart and Cornell Roads. The goal is to finish installation of the remaining five sirens by 2026.

### **Fire Department Safety Equipment**

Since 2018, the department has worked hard to be fiscally responsible by managing the budget while evaluating the operation of the Fire Department. A portion of aging equipment has been replaced, prompting implementation of an annual five-year replacement schedule to support fiscal sensibility now and in future budget years. The five-year plan is updated annually and includes replacement schedules supporting NFPA 1971 and MIOSHA Part 74 Personal Protective Equipment such as structural firefighting clothing, saws, hose, SCBA, tools and more, as well as NFPA 1901, which includes vehicle replacement schedules for ambulances, engines and command vehicles.

In 2021, the department was able to meet equipment needs by purchasing structural firefighting gear, hose, saws, SCBA cylinders, rope equipment, positive pressure fan and COVID-19 personal protective equipment.

### **Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV)**

In 2021, the department acquired a UTV supporting brush fire response within the Township and Ingham County. In early 2021, the Township had over 45 acres of brush fires due to the dry weather. This vehicle functions off road and has a water tank, pump, hose and equipment to stop brush fires from spreading.

### **Department Policies**

In 2018, a goal was set to update all Standard Operational Guides and Standard Operational Procedures that are obsolete or outdated. In 2021, eight operational polices and one COVID-19 policy were updated.

- Employee Discipline
- Sick Leave Usage
- Trade Time
- Leave Time
- Returning From Extended Absence
- Advanced Life Support Medical Vehicle Equipment Removal
- Motor Vehicle Accident Investigation
- Limited Duty
- COVID-19 Exposure

In 2021, a Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP) was developed and is currently out for review. This plan will outline each Township department's roles and responsibilities during emergencies. COOP document drafts developed in 2021 include:

- Meridian COOP Basic Plan
- Meridian COOP Functional Annex
- Meridian COOP Support Plan

Additionally, a Damage Assessment Plan was developed to formalize a process for performing damage assessment during large scale disasters. This is key to documenting critical infrastructure losses that may result in federal dollar reimbursement.

The COOP and Damage Assessment draft plans will be submitted to the Township Manager for review in the first quarter of 2022.

### **Grants**

MTFD received a 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (FEMA) in the amount of \$48,201 for the purchase of ANSI reflective safety vests, air bags, battery operated submergible struts. This equipment will be instrumental during extrications to protect firefighters with reflective vests and disentangle victims trapped in their vehicle.

### **Recruiting**

Over the past two years, the department has evaluated and instituted ways to recruit and retain professional firefighters. There is a substantial shortage of paramedics in Michigan which has created staffing issues for many private ambulance services and fire-based ambulance services. Maneuvering through this challenging time has prompted the department to come up with creative ways to recruit and fill vacant positions. In 2021, a part-time EMT/firefighter was hired and is being sponsored to attend a paramedic course with a guaranteed job starting in January 2023. Moving forward, a plan was developed to hire EMTs full time and send them to paramedic school. Being a service that only hires qualified paramedics, this process changes the way the department hires and operates, so more planning is expected as we move forward with implementation.

## MTFD TEAM

### **FIRE CHIEF**

---

Michael Hamel

### **ADMINISTRATION**

---

Bill Priese, Training/EMS Chief

Tavis Millerov, Fire Marshal

Christine Cassidy, Admin Asst. II

### **BATTALION CHIEFS**

---

Mark Vroman

Ken Phinney

### **CAPTAINS**

---

Bill Richardson

Ryan Campbell

Rudy Gonzales

### **LIEUTENANTS**

---

John McDermott\*\*

Jason Everest

Jeff Rommeck

Al Diaz

Jason Hillard

Chris Johnson

TJ Booms

### **FIREFIGHTERS**

---

Brian Pennell

Eddie Dennis

Erik Sellen

Benjamin Haviland\*

Bob Caretti

Sam Weber

RJ Lewis

Dustin Farhat

Dan Ackles

Joseph Harrison\*

Corey Pant

Amanda Arnett

Chuck Malesko

Nate Lafayette

Tony Kozlowski

Don Carr

Tyler McNalley

Angela Kohls

Steven Garelik

### **Retirements**

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Paul Cullimore

### **Resignations**

---

**Promotions**

---

John McDermott

**PART-TIME FIREFIGHTERS**

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Anne Marie Cavalcante

Kayla Crim (Paramedic Student)

*\*Hired in 2020    \*\* Promoted in 2021    \*\*\* Vacancy*

# HUMAN RESOURCES



The Human Resources Department is responsible for multiple employment related matters including labor relations and contract negotiations, staffing, diversity and inclusion initiatives, payroll, personnel record keeping, benefits administration, pension administration, risk management, legal compliance, personnel policy manual administration and skill-based training programs.

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **COVID-19**

Since March of 2020, the Township has diligently worked to provide service to residents and continue operations to the extent permitted while in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Township implemented a Safe Work from Home Program from November 2020 through May 2021, for employees whose work could, at least in part, be completed at home due to necessity caused by the pandemic. The Township continues to serve our residents without interruption. Serving in its capacity as COVID-19 Workplace Coordinator, HR maintains its connection with leadership and employees, to ensure that necessary steps and precautions are followed to ensure safety while working and serving our community. We have been fortunate for the support and assistance from our Fire Chief and EMS Training Chief, for their ongoing assistance and providing COVID-19 testing for our first responders.

### **Labor Relations**

The Township successfully negotiated 3-year contracts (2020-2022) with four units: Department of Public Works, Administrative Professional Employees, Professional Non-Supervisory Employees and Professional Supervisory Association and 5-year contracts (2020-2024) with three units: Police Command (CCLP), Police Patrol (POAM) and Fire (MTFFA). We return to the table for negotiations with the four units whose contracts are up for renewal at the end of 2022.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives**

A Task Force consisting of [3] Board Trustees and [3] Township Leaders, including the HR Director, has been designated to implement the Township's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) mission, "To Promote and Support a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Workforce Through Training, Evaluation, and Action." Ongoing group meetings and surveys have taken place since the creation of the Task Force, including reporting to the Board and providing updates on the Township's forward momentum and results. Half-day leadership Zoom training was led by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in August 2021, and Township-wide training programs are under development, to be offered on a perpetual basis to keep our goals and actions in alignment. The DEI Task Force is working together to establish a web-based dashboard to capture and measure our actions and progress.

### **Employee Health Insurance Benefits**

The self-insured Blue Care Network (BCN) product has provided savings to the Township even with rising healthcare costs. The Township calculations continued to remain under the PA 152 Hard Cap allowing for no employee premium cost sharing for BCN insurance. Calculations under the hard cap provided an opportunity for a Health Savings Account (HSA) deposit for those employees with BCN coverage. There is a nominal employee premium cost sharing for the alternative option for Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan insurance. Our Township team works in partnership with Gallagher Healthcare Benefits Consultants, to closely monitor actual expenses versus maximum expected costs throughout the benefit year and will continue to do so in order to ensure maximum cost effectiveness.

### **Personnel Policy Manual**

The Personnel Policy Manual is set to undergo a review process to cover periodic updates and to ensure compliance with the latest employment law and and collective bargaining agreement terms.

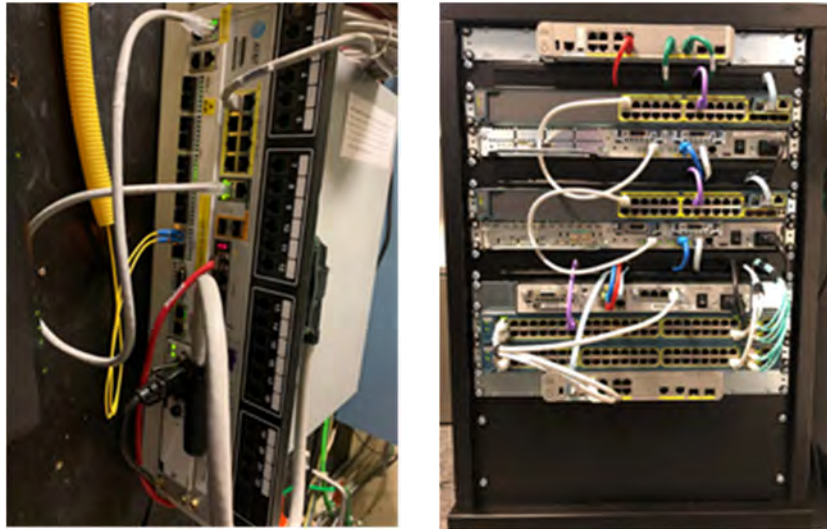
### **Loss Prevention**

Human Resources conducted its annual meeting with Michigan Municipal League's Loss Prevention Department to ensure that we are maintaining our excellent safety practices. Detailed incident reports with direct follow-up investigations continue to reduce repeat injuries. For employees with lost work time, mandated specific re-training is conducted upon return to work. All township vehicles are equipped with COVID-19 prevention-related supplies, as well as, first aid safety kits in case of an emergency. As we continue to do our best to get through the pandemic together, we lean towards electronic/virtual communications in order to keep workers connected and informed, and hope to resume in-person training for such things as CPR, AED, and other safety-related topics in the not-too-distant future.

## **TEAM MEMBERS**

Abigail Tithof, Human Resources Director  
Carol Hasse, Human Resources Administrator  
Michelle Prinz, Executive Assistant

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



## METHODOLOGY FOR OPERATIONAL IMPERATIVES

1. Highest priority is given to core infrastructure stability and keeping existing services and resources operating at optimum performance and availability.
2. Resolution of emergent end-user issues related to technology is an important function that all Department personnel spend a significant time addressing.
3. Training initiatives are utilized in cases where staff resources are recognized to be deficient in the use of available technology or additional expertise would increase employee productivity.
4. Remaining resources are committed to replacing technology that is still functioning, but aging, and at end of useful life.

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

The Department's primary goal continues to be to support Township Board established Goals to the greatest extent possible. While successful in this endeavor, there were many other new important initiatives that were prominent throughout 2021. These included, but were not limited to, bringing on a new third party consultant for a comprehensive IT evaluation, expansion of work-from-home services in response to increasing COVID-19 infection numbers, installation of numerous switched ethernet and other DS-1 circuit replacements throughout our facilities, and the rollout of a third party help-desk service. Also paramount for 2021, was the orientation and training initiatives for the Network Technician positions. In addition to these general efforts, here are a few of the specific accomplishments from 2021:

### **Technology Evaluation and Planning**

The Technology Team worked with Administration to select a vendor to do a complete evaluation of the aging technology infrastructure deployed across Township facilities. Policies, network design, and existing infrastructure were carefully examined throughout the final months of 2021. IT staff produced a myriad of documentation and worked with the selected consultant, Brightline to evaluate network health and determine next best steps. Survey results, and recommended project lists for 2022 are expected in February 2022.



### **Installation of Mobile Workstations and Remote Access Machines for Staff**

After a successful program in 2020, the technology team replaced more traditional mini-tower workstations with docking workstations for key positions throughout the organization. In cases where sensitive information was processed, this project included extension of the existing FIPS 140-2 standard encryption required for some of the connections used on these devices in the Police Records and Investigation work areas.

### **Deploy Hardware to Support Resident's Privacy and Mental Health**

In response to COVID-19, the IT Department worked with the Police Department to purchase and configure Teams enabled tablets to allow trained psychologists to confer directly with at-risk patients at the point an officer recognizes the need for additional support.

### **Expansion of Cellular Services**

IT staff worked with end-user departments to determine need and expanded our inventory of 4G and 5G cellular systems to support enhanced work from home systems even in locations that lacked high performance wired Internet Service Providers.

### **Continued Expansion of Cloud-Based Assets**

IT staff worked with end user Departments to increase utilization of OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams, Zoom and other applications to support virtual operations. These activities will continue over all of 2022.

### **Launched Helpdesk**

As part of the restructuring of the Department, IT has established a relationship with a third party company that can respond to requests for technical support 24 hour a day, 366 days a year. This new relationship allowed IT employees to triage technology issues. This in turn is helping to increase productivity during regular work hours while simultaneously reducing after-hours activities of departmental employees.

### **Established Relationships with Third Party Network Engineering Services**

IT staff worked with Avalon CDW-G and Logicalis consulting services to expand knowledge of Network Technicians as they perform activities related to Desktop, Server, and Network projects undertaken throughout 2021.

### **Routine Items**

The Department serviced over 400 requests for service throughout the year and managed a network with over 1,000 nodes, including security and backup services.

## **TEAM MEMBERS**

Stephen Gebes, Director of Information Technology  
Kristen Cole, Network Technician  
Kamic Jok, Network Technician

# PARKS AND RECREATION



## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **Marketplace on the Green**

Marketplace on the Green is quickly becoming a popular destination in our community as it hosted the Farmers' Market, Wednesday Summer Concert Series and a new Artificial Ice Rink. Thanks to a financial contribution from Delta Dental, a Skate Lending Program was implemented which provides multiple pairs of skates for people to use to enhance participation. The facility was rented multiple times for events such as Haslett High School's Homecoming Dance, an Indian Cultural Celebration, to name a few. Working in partnership with Department of Neighborhood and Economic Development Director Clark, we were awarded a grant from Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) and proudly cut the ribbon on a new art installation SOW by local artist, Dane Porter! A drainage issue was also resolved in the playground area.

### **Central Park Grant Projects: Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector and Gateway Walkway and Restroom in Historical Village**

Implementation of the Central Park Master Plan continued in 2021 with completion of the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector 1/3 mile paved trail, boardwalk and fishing dock in Central Park South. A new restroom building, kiosk, and trailhead amenities were added in the Meridian Historical Village. Funding for these projects were provided through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF), the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Park Millage.

### **5280 Okemos Road**

The Township acquired a two-acre parcel at 5280 Okemos Road. This new two-acre site will serve as the new face for Nancy Moore Park, as well as, a hub for the upcoming MSU to Lake Lansing Trail. Site plans for development will be finalized in 2022. Funding for this acquisition was provided by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Park Millage.

## **Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update 2022-2026**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources requires communities to have a plan on file to qualify for state and federal grant funding. Staff undertook this update in house that included updating all the base information, census data, as well as, seeking community input. The completed plan consists of 120 pages with an additional 422 pages in the appendices. The plan was approved by the Park Commission, adopted by the Township Board and submitted to the DNR by the February 1, 2022 deadline.

### **Nokomis Roof Replacement**

Assisted Nokomis with funding roof repairs and new shingles for their roof. After obtaining quotes, Jimmerson Roofing completed the project.

### **Parks and Pathway Maintenance**

Ongoing maintenance each year includes:

Mowing, tree trimming and cleaning up downed trees from storms, emptying park trash, plowing and salting lots and sidewalks, chipping Christmas trees, mulching garden beds, maintaining ball fields, trail maintenance, playground maintenance, dog park maintenance, general park clean-up, pavilion maintenance and cleaning, cleaning and maintaining park restrooms, watering DDA and Meridian Garden Club flower beds in the summer, event set-up and take down, repairing pathways, maintaining irrigation at various locations, installing and maintaining the DDA snowflakes in downtown Okemos in the winter, installing new bricks in the HNC Patio, raising and lowering flags when necessary and maintaining the new ice rink on a daily basis.

Special Projects in 2021 included:

- Transplanted the elm tree at the Historical Village to allow it more room to grow
- Renovated the gazebo in the Historical Village
- Painted the restrooms at Wonch and Ferguson Parks
- Assisted the Buildings/Ground Department with the kitchenette renovation at Town Hall
- Made much needed trail improvements in Central Park and Legg Park
- Built a new moleh play feature in the Nature Exploration Area at HNC equipped with a tunnel and slide
- Repaired the floor and added carpet to the new HNC classroom
- Removed 85 dead deer from pathways and roads
- Removed and poured new concrete at the front of the Harris Nature Center building in order to make the front entrance accessible
- Installed new door controllers for the front doors at HNC making them accessible by push button
- Installed a new railing along the footbridge in Eastgate Park
- Installed a new bike pump at Marketplace on the Green – donated by Leonard Provencher
- Installed new benches at Marshall Park, Nancy Moore Park, Triangle Property and Small Dog Park
- Installed a new sign/kiosk at Meridian Historical Village
- Worked with ReLeaf to plant 14 trees at Central Park South
- Completed the trailhead sign project by installing the final signs and trail markers at Central Park South, Central Park and Nancy Moore Park
- Installed the new synthetic ice rink at Marketplace on the Green

### **Harris Nature Center (HNC) Facility/Programming Report**

The Harris Nature Center building received a beautiful facelift in 2021. Improvements included: a new trailside restroom building, new pavilion, new elevated 16 foot x 16 foot accessible bird viewing platform, a new concrete front walk, new ADA electric doors, and a wetlab renovation. Despite the pandemic, HNC staff made great efforts to offer programs to engage the public with the natural world while still keeping people safe. HNC participated in MSU's Annual Science Festival by offering virtual programs to school groups from all over the United States. In Michigan, we reached as far as Bay City and in the U.S. we presented to a school from as far away as Missouri! The Nature Center welcomed a new Eastern Screech Owl to the educational exhibits and collaborated with MSU and their Conservation Stewards Program where a group of students transplanted several native meadow species to the habitat surrounding the

new Observation Deck along the trails at HNC. Quick Facts: • Hosted two weeks of Annie’s Big Nature Lesson with 71 students • 2,588 drop-in visitors • 2,627 total program participants • 525 summer camp participants

### **Farmers’ Market Report**

The Farmers’ Market continues to be a bright spot for our residents and visitors alike. The Market operated a total of 59 days in 2021 (41 Saturdays and 18 Wednesdays). The new home at Marketplace on the Green has assisted greatly with enhanced parking, accessibility, space and social opportunities. The Wednesday markets from July-October hosted free live music concerts from 6:00pm-9:00pm with food trucks and entertainment on Saturdays, as well. Quick Facts: 130 unique vendors • 62 new vendors • Total Customers: 95,218 people • Food assistance utilized at the Market: Total= \$48,210 (doubled from 2020).

### **Senior Center**

The Meridian Senior Center, located at Chippewa Middle School, provides for the educational, enrichment and social needs of adults aged 55 and over. The Senior Center operation is a partnership between Meridian Township and Okemos Public Schools.

The Senior Center Staff operated virtual programs from January – April and began in-person activities in May. A wide variety of programs and events (644) hosted almost 2,000 participants. The three most popular activities included Fitness and Exercise; Education and Lifelong Learning, and Health and Wellness. Quick Facts: • 29 new members this year • 536 total members.

### **Deer Management – 11<sup>th</sup> Year**

The Parks and Recreation Department placed and managed 75 hunters on 1,600 acres of parks and land preserves (41 properties) during the 2021 Deer Management Archery Program, as well as, on seven private properties. The total deer harvested by the archers was 128.

The first Police Department firearms cull took place from January – March, 2021 with a total of 150 deer harvested. All the deer harvested from both programs were processed and donated to area food banks thanks to a partnership with Michigan Sportsman Against Hunger.

### **Youth Sports and Events**

- Youth flag football – 221 students; Youth baseball/softball- 475; Youth soccer- 392; Adult sports- 28 teams; Senior exercise-150
- Sporties for Shorties – 420 (3-5 year olds)
- Howl-o-ween Event at Dog Park – 34 dogs and Owners; Halloween at the Market- 650 children
- Drive Thru Santa 32 vehicles and 100+ participants

## **PARK COMMISSION**

The Meridian Township Park Commissioners are elected to 4-year terms and have the responsibility of setting policy and direction for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks.

## **PARK COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Mary Nardo Farris, Chair  
Ami Van Antwerp, Vice Chair  
Mark McDonald  
Mark Stephens  
Amanda Lick

## **LAND PRESERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

### **Volunteer and Meridian Conservation Corps (MCC) Accomplishments**

The Meridian Conservation Corps consists of 185 total members (50 new members in 2021) who

volunteered 1,047 hours. Planting a Native Meridian launched in May 2021. While removing invasive species is a top stewardship priority, planning native species in their place is just as important. Quick Facts: 220 native trees planted • 150 native flower plugs planted • thousands of seeds collected. The Invasive Species Strike Team works hard throughout the season to bring stewardship to as many parks and preserves as possible, removing invasive species to open up habitat for native plants, wildlife, and insects. Quick Facts: • 1,000 pounds of invasive species removed • 30 stewardship work days • 19 species of invasive plants managed and mapped with GIS. This year marked the start of annual neighborhood cleanups that will continue to grow and include more Township areas. This is the start of a partnership between residents, local businesses and the Township to create a cleaner, safer and more sustainable community. 3,160 pounds of litter removed from pathways, parks, and preserves in the Township.

### **Love a Park Day**

34 volunteers worked across six Township parks (Ferguson Park, Hartrick Park, Hillbrook Park, Nancy Moore Park, Orlando Park, and Wonch Park) to clean up park sign gardens and plant flowers.

### **Community Connection with Michigan State University**

We worked with Dr. David Rothstein, Dr. David MacFarlane and Ingham County Parks Staff to offer students of the Forestry Field Studies Course to gain real experience developing management plans for land managers. We will continue to collaborate annually with Dr. John Paskus' Community Sustainability Course to engage students in the field management of invasive species, and public outreach; 10-15 students participate each year.

### **Wetland Education and Restoration Program**

The goal of this program is to expand the community's knowledge of ecosystem services wetlands provide, Township ordinances and state regulations for wetland protection, as well as, local restoration efforts and conservation. A wetland education letter and brochure was sent out to 1,460 residents in the fall of 2021. The program launched on February 2, 2021 on World Wetlands Day. Wetland Walks were offered the first Wednesday of every month, to tour Township wetlands.

### **Community Education and Outreach (Presentations, Trainings, & Workshops)**

- Virtual Invasive Species Training Webinar, January; 38 participants
- Meridian Garden Club, Virtual Invasive Species Training, February
- Invasive Species Field Training Workshop, March; 27 participants
- MSU Science Festival Presenter for Invasive Species Outreach Applications & Resources, April; 20 participants
- Lansing League of Women Voters Presenter on Environmental Benefits of Planting Native, May; 36 participants
- Conservation Stewards Program Presenter on Wetland Conservation & Restoration, October; 25 participants

### **LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

Jamie Hiller, Chair  
Steve Thomas, Vice-Chair  
Yu Man Lee  
Chanelle Russ

Kris Parnell  
Kendra Grasseschi, Environmental Commission Liaison  
Dan Opsommer, Township Board Liaison  
Mark Stephens, Park Commissioner Liaison

### **TEAM MEMBERS**

#### **Administration**

LuAnn Maisner  
Bridget Cannon  
Michael Devlin  
Jane Greenway

Director of Parks and Recreation  
Administrative Assistant II  
Parks and Recreation Specialist  
Senior Parks and Land Management Coordinator

Emma Campbell  
Kati Adams  
Tom Cary

Land Stewardship Coordinator  
Parks, Pathways and Land Preservation Superintendent  
Farmers' Market Manager

**Harris Nature Center**

Kati Adams  
Allison Goodman  
Annica Brocker  
Lauren Colby  
Audra Francis  
Bryce Usiak

Parks and Land Preservation Superintendent  
Park Naturalist  
Assistant Park Naturalist  
Assistant Park Naturalist  
Assistant Park Naturalist  
Assistant Park Naturalist

**Parks, Land Preservation and Pathways**

Kati Adams  
Larry Bobb  
Traverse Fuller  
Josh Cannon  
Dan Inman  
Tom Baker  
Troy Goodwin

Parks and Land Preservation Superintendent  
Parks, Land Preservation & Pathways Maintenance Lead  
Utility Worker  
Utility Worker  
Utility Worker  
Utility Worker  
Utility Worker

**Meridian Senior Center**

Cherie Wisdom  
Courtney Caltrider

Center Coordinator  
Administrative Assistant

# POLICE



The Meridian Township Police Department is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships in our community; and with understanding, cooperation and equality; we strive to enhance the quality of life and protect the rights of our community.

## CORE VALUES

### **COMPASSION**

We care for and empathize with our fellow human beings.

### **COURAGE**

We face danger to ensure the safety of others. We will stand up for what is right. We will be brave when others may not. We strive to eliminate fear through our actions.

### **EXCELLENCE**

We employ those who strive to achieve a higher standard. We listen to our employees and the members of our community to continually improve our effectiveness and reliability. We strive to exceed community and professional expectations.

### **FAIRNESS**

We will treat all individuals impartially. We will act in a just manner. We appreciate different points of view. We exercise discretion appropriately.

### **INTEGRITY**

We will fulfill our mission in its entirety using sound principles, honesty and sincerity.

### **RESOURCEFULNESS**

We can be relied upon for help and support. We have the ability to deal with situations effectively. We build on our mutual experiences to effectively resolve problems.

### **RESPECT**

We value the rights and beliefs of others. We are courteous. We treat others as we expect to be

treated. We appreciate diversity.

**WORK ETHIC**

We are self-motivated and self-directed. We do what is asked and strive to achieve expectations. We hold ourselves to a higher standard.

In 2021, there were 17,211 calls for service (excluding traffic stops 3,646).

<b>2021 Written Reports</b>	
Alarms	545
Traffic Crashes	786
All Other	3,677
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,008</b>

**Yearly Comparisons**

**Written Reports**

<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
6,801	6,421	4,963	<b>5,008</b>

**Calls for Service**

<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
18,588	18,552	16,228	<b>17,211</b>

**Arrests**

<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
577	563	402	<b>554</b>

**Citations**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Citations Issued	1,922	2,096	1,517	<b>1,711</b>
<b>Total # of Charges</b>	<b>2,379</b>	<b>2,857</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>2,279</b>

**Traffic Safety**

Meridian Township Police Department views traffic safety as an important key to keeping the community safe. The Department works with the Ingham County Road Commission and the State Highway Department to address road design related concerns. Officers take enforcement in areas identified as directed patrols based on complaints from citizens. A speed trailer and speed signs are used to complete traffic studies regarding speed-related safety concerns and traffic counts, as well as, educate motorists, and can be deployed in locations identified by citizens as areas of concern. This year we completed 39 directed patrols and 19 traffic surveys.

Due to COVID restrictions, the number of car seat inspections was lower than previous years as nine (9) car seat inspections were completed, two of those inspections identified faulty seats that needed to be replaced.



### **Traffic Crash Investigation Team**

Traffic crashes involving fatal or potentially fatal injuries require investigators with specialized training and equipment. Area law enforcement agencies have committed personnel to the Ingham Regional Crash Investigation Team (IRCIT). On-duty team members are called to assist participating agencies with potentially fatal crash investigations. This effort has increased the experience of the investigators while reducing overtime costs for the Departments. In 2021, the Department requested the regional crash investigation team four (4) times, while providing assistance on six (6) instances outside of the Township.

<b>Meridian Township Deer Involved Collision Data</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Injury Involved</b>	<b>No Injury Involved</b>	<b>Total</b>
2018	2	125	127
2019	3	150	153
2020	5	157	162
<b>2021</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>129</b>

### **Volunteers**

We are thankful that we were able to have our Halloween open house this year. To limit the amount of people in the building at one time, our volunteer was able to greet the visitors, check them in, and keep them spread out until they could enjoy the open house. We are still looking to find additional volunteers to assist with our parking program.

### **Community Police Officers**

Community Policing is the cornerstone of all our actions and interactions. From the first day of employment until the day they retire, officers are assigned to specific neighborhoods to participate in community activities, communicate directly with citizens, and form relationships, so that our community trusts and understands our Department.

Our largest community event is National Night Out which is an annual event to promote community partnerships with law enforcement and take a stand against crime. Officers visit nearly 30 neighborhoods that have gatherings to promote safety throughout the community. The 2021 event was a large success as communities sought to come together after a difficult year.

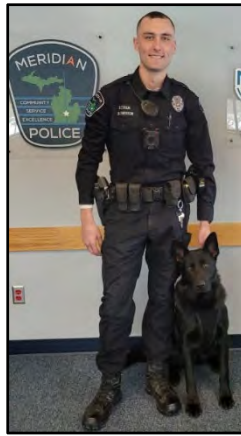
National Faith & Blue Weekend is based on the premise that strong communities are built on mutual respect, trust and understanding. Law enforcement entities and faith-based groups are key pillars of a local community, and when they work together, neighborhoods thrive. The Department worked with several local faith based organizations to have small gatherings during the event weekend.

### **Adult Crossing Guards**

The Department hires, trains, and manages the six adult school crossing guards for the six schools in the township. The guards are supervised by the School Resource Officers.

### **Canine Team**

In 2021, the Department maintained one K9 Team, Ofc. Anderson and K9 Ares, that is trained in article searches, area searches, building searches, narcotics detection and tracking. Surrounding Departments request or provide mutual aid from K9 Teams when they either do not have one on-duty or do not have one at their Department. Ofc. Anderson and K9 Ares completed 455.5 hours of monthly maintenance training, as well as, certifying nationally through the National Association of Professional Canine Handlers (NAPCH) at the yearly seminar.



2021 Canine Team Activity Numbers	
Calls Handled By Meridian's Canine Team	25
Calls Handled By Other Departments	11
Call Outs To Other Departments	14
<b>Total Calls For Service</b>	<b>50</b>
Activity Type	
Ingham Regional SRT	0
Article Search	7
Area Search	1
Building Search	5
Narcotics Search	19
School Sweeps (OHS/HHS/ELHS)	0
Tracking	25
Demonstrations	3
Other Use	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

\*A canine call may include more than one activity type.

### Special Response Team

The Ingham Regional Special Response Team (IRSRT) is comprised of personnel from the Ingham County Sheriff's Department, East Lansing Police Department, MSU Police Department, and Meridian Township Police Department. The team is called upon by agencies when a tactical team is needed to respond. Meridian Township commits three officers and one sergeant to the team. Meridian Township Officers received 444 hours of regular monthly training and 224 hours of annual training. This totals 668 hours of yearly training. IRSRT had eight activations in 2021.

### School and Community Resource Unit

The School and Community Resource Unit is comprised of two officers who work with the Haslett and Okemos Public Schools. The officers provide a number of services to the schools in an effort to provide a safe environment for children to learn. The officers also assist with a number of community events. Unfortunately, no classes were held in 2021, but the officers still visited schools when allowed to.

The officers participated in "No Senior without Christmas" event. This is a Tri-County TRIAD program. There were 400 holiday baskets distributed to the tri-county elderly residents. Meridian Township delivered 28 of those.

Meridian Township held their own virtual "Shop with a Cop" event. The officers worked with school counselors and 9 area students participated. The officers worked in conjunction with Walmart, Jets

Pizza of Haslett, the Haslett Okemos Rotary Foundation, and the Patrol Officer’s Union.

**Investigations Unit**

The Investigations Unit is overseen by the Services Division Commander. The Investigations Sergeant handles the day-to-day activities of the unit. The unit generally consists of a sergeant, four investigators, and a Court Services Officer (CSO). Personnel are selected to serve in the unit for a three-year term. Extensions may be granted to the investigators based on experience within the unit and the needs of the Department.

Investigators are assigned criminal complaints including, but not limited to homicides, sexual assaults, robberies, child abuse, home invasions, embezzlements, larcenies, and death investigations. Cases are considered closed when a suspect has been identified and the prosecutor has reviewed the case and recommended charges, or all investigative options have been exhausted. Crimes against persons are given greater priority than crimes against property.

The table below shows the Investigations Unit assigned a total of 279 complaints in 2021.

<b>Complaints Assigned Per Year</b>	
2018	467
2019	504
2020	351
<b>2021</b>	<b>279</b>

**Court Services**

The Court Services Officer (CSO) is responsible for tracking and processing criminal complaints and submitting them to the Ingham County Prosecutors Office or Township Attorney for warrant requests and juvenile petitions. The CSO is also responsible for the registration and address verification of sex offenders in the township.

<b>COURT SERVICES</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Subpoenas Served	832	692	729	<b>328</b>
Personal Protection Orders	38	41	43	<b>40</b>
Warrant Requests	605	614	581	<b>787</b>
Warrants Signed by CSO	429	378	362	<b>251</b>
Twp. Attorney Requests	188	144	113	<b>93</b>
Total Petition Requests	134	102	39	<b>50</b>
Retail Fraud Requests	332	234	190	<b>145</b>
OWI Requests	66	62	61	<b>69</b>
Assault Requests	48	42	47	<b>127</b>
Assault Requests-Domestic	175	180	151	<b>138</b>
Larceny/Fraud Requests	95	82	70	<b>48</b>
Narcotics Requests	75	20	10	<b>16</b>

**Records Unit**

The Records Unit is led by the records unit supervisor who is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the unit. The Records Unit consists of a supervisor, a full-time technician, and a part-time technician. Their duties include, but are not limited to, preparing criminal reports for prosecution, reporting crimes to the state, organization of all police records, and FOIA requests. The unit compiles statistics from a variety of databases and provides the information to department staff, the Township Manager, and the

Township Board. Background checks, handgun registration, copies of traffic crash and police reports can be obtained through the Records Unit.

<b>Annual Crime Reporting Summary</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>% Change 2020-2021</b>
Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter	0	1	1	0	-100%
Rape and Attempted Rape	58	70	51	62	22%
Robbery	15	12	12	10	-17%
Aggravated Assault	41	37	39	35	-10%
<b>Total Part 1 Violent Crime</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>4%</b>
Burglary	115	96	88	64	-27%
Larceny	864	935	749	611	-18%
Vehicle Theft	21	52	44	56	27%
Arson	3	4	0	6	600%
<b>Total Part 1 Property Crime</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>-16%</b>
<b>Total Part 1 Offenses</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>-14%</b>
OWI Arrests (Liquor or Drugs)	72	63	53	69	30%
Traffic Accident – Roadway	916	847	588	785	34%

### **Training**

Under the direction of the Chief of Police, the Training Sergeant oversees all training for the Department. The Department provided employees with 4,610 hours of training in 2021. It included some of the following:

- In-Service: 1,741 hours (this includes cultural competency, de-escalation training, mental health/PRT training)
- External: 2,337 hours
- Firearms: 312 hours

The in-service training program consists of monthly training for all sworn employees, periodic roll call videos, policy tests, quarterly firearms sessions, and computer based instruction. The external training program utilizes universities and private experts to handle specialized training outside the scope of the Department trainers. The Department strives to remain at the forefront of progressive policing by acknowledging the importance of both continuing education to retain current skills and the acquisition of new knowledge for officers to expand their skill base.

### **Accreditation**

In February 2020, the Department became the first police agency in mid-Michigan to gain full accreditation status from the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (MLEAC). Accreditation is a progressive and time-proven way of assisting law enforcement to improve performance and service to the community. It is the voluntary adoption of the best practices in law enforcement and requires a constant evaluation of the professional objectives set forth by the MLEAC. Accreditation status acknowledges the implementation of conceptually sound written directives, policies, procedures, and training.

The department is assessed every three years by the MLEAC and must prove compliance with the standards each year. The next on-site assessment will take place at the end of 2022.

### **Mid-Michigan Police Academy**

The Services Division Commander is assigned as a coordinator for the Mid-Michigan Police Academy which is hosted by Lansing Community College. As a coordinator, the Services Division Commander

works closely with the recruits in training and career development. The coordinator also has the unique position of monitoring the recruit's individual progress and identifying potential candidates for employment at Meridian Township Police Department (MTPD).

In 2021, MTPD sponsored two recruits through the 108<sup>th</sup> session of the Mid-Michigan Police Academy. Megan and Maggie Cole were serving MTPD as police cadets and were given sponsorships. Both graduated and are currently assigned to the Patrol Division as officers.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Citizens' Academy**

The Department hosted a ten-week Citizens' Academy that meets once a week for three hours in the fall. This academy exposes the attendees to police operations and procedures. We were able to hold one this year! The department initially had 16 enrollees and graduated 11. We received great feedback and look forward to holding it again next year.

### **15<sup>th</sup> Youth Citizens' Academy**

The Department hosts a seven-week Youth Academy that meets once a week for two hours in the spring. The students learn about police work while being able to experience hands-on activities. The Department did not host a Youth Academy in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Property Room Report**

The Quartermaster maintains the property room. Activity involving the property room in 2021 included:

- 1,868 items entered as evidence.
- 470.58 pounds of narcotics incinerated from the Prescription Drug Drop Off Box.
- 45 firearms sent to the Michigan State Police for destruction.

The Department processed 190 abandoned vehicles in 2021.

### **Citizen Satisfaction Survey**

A total of 1,200 citizen satisfaction surveys were mailed to victims and complainants involved in traffic accidents and other calls for service in Meridian and Williamstown Township. Surveys are used as a tool to monitor customer satisfaction with the Department's services. In 2021, a total of 241 surveys were returned. The 20% response rate decreased compared to 2020.

#### **Citizen Satisfaction Survey for Sworn Personnel**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Rating of Excellent/Good</b>
Helpfulness	97%
Friendliness	98%
Knowledge	96%
Quality of Service	96%
Professional Conduct	96%
Response Time	95%

#### **Rating of Emergency and Non-Emergency Dispatch Service (Ingham 911 Dispatch)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Rating of Excellent/Good</b>
Helpfulness	78%
Friendliness	78%
Knowledge	78%
Quality of Service	78%

Professional Conduct	79%
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*\*Not all questions generated a response.*

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

In conjunction with the Township Manager, the Department establishes goals to help in the delivery of law enforcement services. Many of our goal accomplishments and other activities are listed as follows.

**Maintain accreditation and meet newly added standards through the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission while preparing for our 2022 onsite assessment.**

Though no new standards were introduced this year, it is anticipated that the use of force standard will be updated with the best practices in law enforcement. In anticipation of this change, MTPD updated our Use of Force General Order to reflect the best practices as set forth by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The Department continues to prepare for our on-site evaluation, which will occur in December of 2022.

**Work diligently toward full staffing (41) and provide opportunities that promote employee retention.**

Since December of 2020, the Department has hired six officers. Four of these officers were former MTPD cadets and three were sponsored by the Township through the Mid-Michigan Police Academy. New committees have been formed including a social media committee, a uniform committee, and a health and wellness committee with the goal of incentivizing officers to stay at the Department. A retention committee was also formed that will meet regularly to discuss ideas on how to retain employees. The Department is currently staffed with 36 sworn officers. There are three qualified candidates currently in the hiring process.

**Continue collective efforts to foster an environment that is welcoming, diverse and inclusive.**

Of the ten most recently hired officers, six are female. Conditional offers have been extended and accepted by three officer candidates. One is a white female, one is a black male, and one is a white male. Two of these candidates meet the requirements to be sponsored by the Township through the Mid-Michigan Police Academy in January 2022. Two police cadet candidates have passed the background investigation and will be hired by MTPD in November. One is a black female and the other is a white male. All MTPD officers attended a three-hour training on implicit bias in June of 2021. Officer Megan Miller was assigned to the investigations unit.

**Prepare staff for succession due to retirements or promotions through training and mentoring.**

- Sergeant Andrew Tobias and Sergeant Brian Canen attended MSU School of Criminal Justice First Line Supervision in September.
- Sergeant Chris Lofton graduated from the MSU School of Criminal Justice School of Staff and Command.
- Lieutenant Rick Grillo was promoted to Captain and Sergeant. Bart Crane was promoted to Lieutenant.
- Officer Mike Hagbom was promoted to Sergeant.
- Officers Ian Mandernack and Lorenzo Velasquez were trained as Field Training Officers.

**Assist the Parks Department with the deer management efforts to reduce property damage and traffic crashes.**

In 2021, the Meridian Township Police Department participated in a deer cull during the months of January and February. During that time, 150 deer were harvested. The cull led to a five year low in traffic crashes involving deer. The number of crashes involving deer on average from 2015-2019 was 114 (2020 was not used as a comparable due to the reduced traffic pattern). The number of crashes involving deer in 2021 was 106, a 7% reduction.

**Implement new technology to improve our ability to operate remotely during an emergency or pandemic situation.**

MTPD was awarded over \$20,000 through the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Grant. Through grant funding, web cameras were added to most desktop computers throughout the Department. Laptop computers were purchased for the employees in the records unit, as well as, the investigations unit. These laptops allowed for work to be completed remotely. LogMeIn licenses were purchased for the records unit, the administrative assistant, and the investigations unit allowing them to access their computers remotely.

**Work toward implementation of the new countywide public safety radio networks to enhance communications and operations.**

- All patrol cars have been outfitted with the new radio system.
- All officers have been issued new radios and have received training in their use.
- Special radio equipment has been purchased for use by our motorcycle units and members of our Special Response Team.
- New radio system allows for encryption when transmitting sensitive information and for use statewide when traveling outside of our jurisdictional boundary.
- The radio system has gone active countywide and is being used by all public safety providers for emergency services.

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP POLICE SERVICES**

The Meridian Township Police Department provides law enforcement services to Williamstown Township. The 2019-2021 contract arranges for Williamstown Township to compensate Meridian Township \$234,316.00 for calendar year 2021 and \$58.41 per hour outside of the 80 hours of weekly patrol for emergency and non-emergency responses.

<b>Williamstown Township Statistics</b>				
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Written Reports	384	323	285	280
Calls for Service	1769	1451	1304	1506
Calls for Service (excluding traffic stops)	1239	1038	1043	1143
Arrests	20	17	8	12
Citations Issued	101	170	115	95
Total Number of Charges	120	204	132	111

<b>Written Reports</b>				
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Alarms	61	52	31	29
Traffic Crashes	116	107	102	105
All Other	207	164	152	146
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>280</b>

## MTPD TEAM MEMBERS

### **CHIEF**

Ken Plaga

### **ASSISTANT CHIEF**

Brad Bach\*\*

### **CAPTAIN**

Richard Grillo

### **LIEUTENANT**

Bart Crane

### **SERGEANTS**

Edward Besonen

Curt Squires

Andrew McCready

Andrew Tobias

Chris Lofton

Jason Clements

Brian Canen

Mike Hagbom\*\*\*

### **OFFICERS BY SENIORITY**

Christina Scaccia

Jeff Adams

Kyle Royston

Rebecca Payne

Bryan LeRoy

Doug Strouse

Aaron McConaughy

Dan King

Adam Slavick

Ian Mandernack

Lerico White\*\*\*

Megan Miller

Austin Dietz

Blaine Anderson

Lorenzo Velasquez

Antonio Trevino

Jaclyn Allen

David Reinke

Wes Talbot

Jordan Kuhn\*\*\*

Sierra Alvarado

Megan Heinemann

Meghan Cole\*

Maggie Cole\*

Bryant Martin\*

Taya Catherwood\*

### **CIVILIAN PERSONNEL**

Kristi Schaeding, Administrative Assistant

Lynne Bach, Records Supervisor\*\*

Lori Hagan, Records Technician

Alycia Boik, Records Technician\*

Jennifer Ramsey, Records Technician\*

Heidi LaFargue, Records Technician\*

### **CADETS**

Maryam Masood\*\*\*

Maxwell Bland

Lucas Parker

Elicia Giachino

Natalie Tyndall

Baylie Kaiser

Sarah Hubbard\*

Cassidy Forbes\*

Sophia Canine\*\*\*

Cody Vogt\*

\*Hired in 2021

\*\*Retired in 2021

\*\*\*Resigned in 2021



# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT



Charter Township of Meridian Code of Ordinances: Chapter 2, Article 1

A Department of Public Works shall be created and the department shall be headed by the Director of Public Works and Engineering. The department shall be responsible for all matters relating to the management, maintenance, and operation of all the physical properties of the Township. This department shall have exclusive control of the construction, maintenance, and operation of the Township sewers and water mains, the operation of Township dumps and landfills, the operation and maintenance of the cemetery, and the maintenance of all Township facilities.

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

### **Water**

The budgeted 16-inch valve replacement project was rebid in November. The first bid process received only one interested party and was outside our engineering estimate. The valve replacement project is related to the Grand River water main project being completed as part of the MDOT Grand River rehabilitation and resurfacing project in 2022.

The water distribution team completed that annual fall hydrant-flushing program in November.

Design specifications for the north tower coating project are completed and the work will be bid out

this winter. The work will commence in the spring of 2022 and include the placement of the Township logo on the storage tank face.

The Dobie Road Booster improvements are currently in design and require coordination with our ELMWSA and Lansing BWL partners. We anticipate construction and implementation of this project to occur in 2022.

The Engineering team spent considerable time on the water main design, submittals to EGLE and coordination for both Sparrow and MDOT projects.

### **Sanitary Sewer**

The Shoal and Whitehills Lake Lift Station standby generator projects were completed this year.

The Sewer rehabilitation project for the Lake Lansing area sewer rehabilitation project is delayed until 2022.

The City of East Lansing is currently reviewing our design for the Towar Garden meter replacement project. That project is expected to commence in 2022.

A new Georgetown Sewer Payback agreement was finalized and approved in 2021.

Since 2014, we have continued to collaborate with the City of East Lansing and Michigan State University on improvements to the WRRF. These completed and ongoing projects have resulted in significant operational, safety and environmental improvements.

### **Buildings and Grounds**

In the spring of 2021, the Municipal Building HVAC project was completed.

The Municipal Building exterior doors and locks were replaced.

LED office light conversions at the Public Safety Building were completed.

New Drinking fountains with water bottle fills were installed in all Township facilities.

The Municipal Building second floor breakroom was updated and improved.

A new Township Trustee office was created in the Municipal Building.

The Township property at Mack and Reynolds had a new fence installed.

The South Fire Station had new HVAC controls installed.

The Service Center had an on-demand water heater installed.

The Township property at Marsh/Lake and Reynolds has new concrete pathways and benches installed.

### **Sidewalk Order to Maintain project in the Heritage Hills and Briarwood West neighborhoods.**

This project is underway and expected to be completed in the spring of 2022. Several sidewalks squares will need to be replaced as they were damaged by a walker and their dog.

### **Other**

The Powell Road paving special assessment project was completed. The paving and curb plan was modified to protect two mature oak trees and to date, has been successful.

The Silverstone Streetlight Special Assessment District was completed.

Significant planning and design efforts occurred this year with representatives of the MDOT, the Ingham County Road Department, and the Ingham County Drain Commissioner on upcoming 2022 road and drain projects.

The first part of the Daniels Drain Special Assessment District was started this year. Final assessments will be set in 2022.

Solicitation of a new Lake Lansing Environmental Consultant was completed. The consultant is used to develop a management plan for Lake Lansing and is funded with the Lake Lansing Special Assessment District.

An updated facility master plan was created for the existing Recycling Center. The plan was used to submit an EGLE grant application, but we were not successful in receiving an award in 2021. The grant will be revised and resubmitted in 2022.

A Wetland education brochure was created and mailed to over 1,000 households in Meridian.

Two electronic recycling events were held in 2021.

Negotiations on a new electric franchise agreement with the Lansing Board of Water and Light commenced in 2021. Negotiations are still ongoing.

The coordination of two Consumers Electrical line clearance projects with our residents occurred in 2021.

A comprehensive IT Network Assessment was undertaken in 2021.

Additional work was completed on the RRQZ for the CN RR line that crosses the Township. Additional work will occur in 2022, including the potential implementation of the project.

The Township participated in an electrical vehicle/fleet analysis funded by Consumers Energy. The final report will be available in 2022.

### **Operation and Maintenance Highlights in 2021**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Task(s) completed</b>
Emergency After-hour responses	282
MISS DIG (811) utility locate requests	5,903
Water service installs	6
Water service repairs	18
Water main repairs	18
Water valve repairs	8
Hydrant repairs, relocations	10
Hydrants flushed	319
Meter installations	412
Meter register replacements	326
Meter pit installations, repairs	6
Sewer incident responses	83
Lift station wet-well cleanings completed	30

Sanitary sewer main jetted-cleaned	87,011 feet
Sanitary sewer main televising and inspection	15,303 feet
Glendale Cemetery burials	50
Vehicle and Equipment repair requests	683
Facility maintenance requests	214
Soil Erosion permit inspections	362
Utility permits inspections	341
Development plan reviews	199
Pathway and sidewalk permit inspections	45
New pathway added to system	2,708 feet
New water main added to system	760 feet
New sanitary sewer added to system	294 feet

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

John Sarver, Chair  
 Anna Colby, Vice-Chair  
 William McConnell  
 J. James Kielbaso  
 Courtney Wisinski, Township Board Liaison

Kendra Grasseschi  
 Valerie Lafferty  
 James E. Jackson  
 Tom Frazier  
 Luca Wisinski, Student

### TEAM MEMBERS

#### **Administration**

Derek N. Perry Deputy Township Manager  
 Director of Public Works & Engineering  
 Denise Green Administrative Assistant II

#### **Engineering**

Younes Ishraidi, P.E., C.F.M. Chief Engineer  
 Nyal Nunn, C.F.M. Senior Project Engineer  
 Jay Graham Records Manager  
 Michael Love Engineering Technician  
 Tom Westerfield Engineering Technician  
 Madison Murphy Engineering Intern (PT)  
 Michael Hayward Engineering Intern (PT)  
 Owne Rokita Engineering Intern (PT)

#### **Geographic Information Systems**

Cara Maney GIS Specialist

#### **Environmental Programs**

LeRoy Harvey Environmental Programs Coordinator (PT)

#### **Public Works Superintendent**

Rob MacKenzie

#### **Water Utility**

Robert Stacy Lead Utility Worker  
 Mike Ellis Utility Worker  
 David Lester Utility Worker  
 Dan Palacios Utility Worker

D'Destin Kaufmann	Utility Worker
Derrick Bobb	Utility Worker
Ben McCann	Utility Worker
James Arnett	Utility Worker

**Sewer Utility**

Jacob Flannery	Lead Utility Worker
Kyle Fogg	Utility Worker
Don Cuson	Utility Worker
David Borowicz	Utility Worker

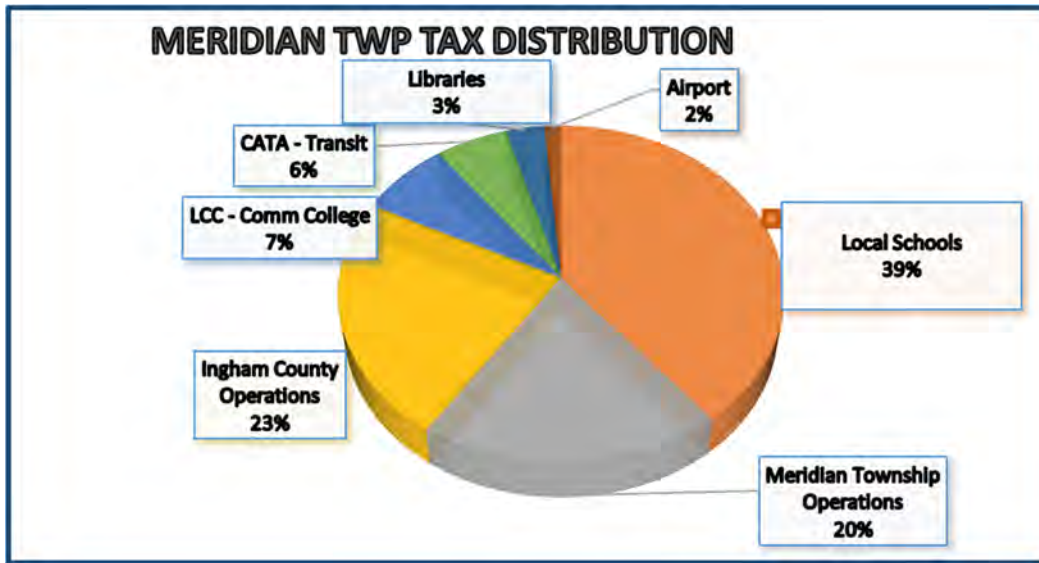
**Buildings, Grounds and Cemetery**

Tyler Kennel	Lead Utility Worker
Keith Hewitt	Utility Worker

**Motor Pool**

Todd Frank	Lead Mechanic
Jim Hansen	Mechanic

# TREASURER'S OFFICE



This past year of 2021 was another very challenging year for virtually everyone in our community due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Treasurer's office, we continued working with our 44,000 residents to be accommodating to all with our collection of tax and utility payments. While water shut offs resumed in the Summer of 2021, we worked with all our delinquent payers to avoid shut offs.

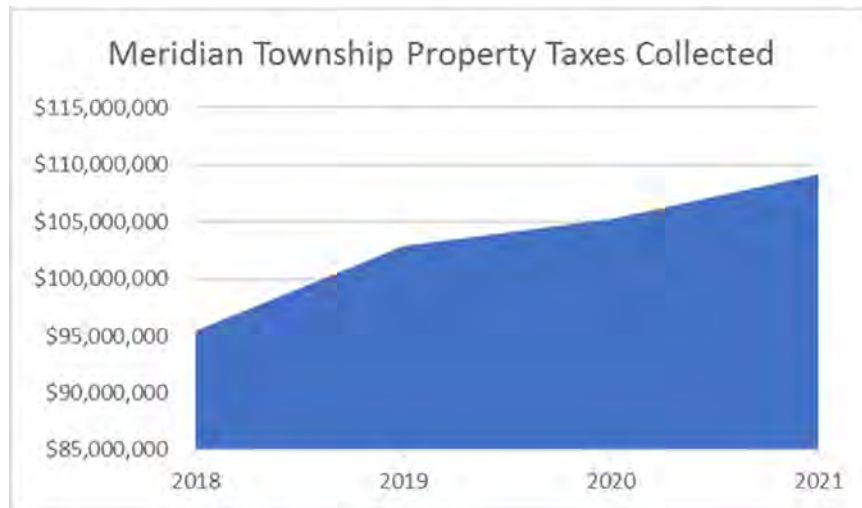
In 2021 the Treasurer's office provided our residents with access to many services without having to set foot in our buildings.

The Treasurer's Office is required by law to receive and take charge of all funds belonging to the Township and those funds to be distributed to other taxing authorities. These collections are primarily real estate and personal property taxes, but also include fines, licenses, permits, deposits, bonds, and fees.

The Treasurer is required to pay out funds to local school districts. In Meridian Township, these include the Okemos School District, Haslett School District, East Lansing School District, Williamston School District, Ingham Intermediate Schools, and Lansing Community College. Other governmental units also receive tax money from Meridian Township according to each taxing authority's millage. Temporary surplus funds are invested prudently with the emphasis on the safety of the principal as required by state law.

During the calendar year 2021, the Treasurer's Office reported:

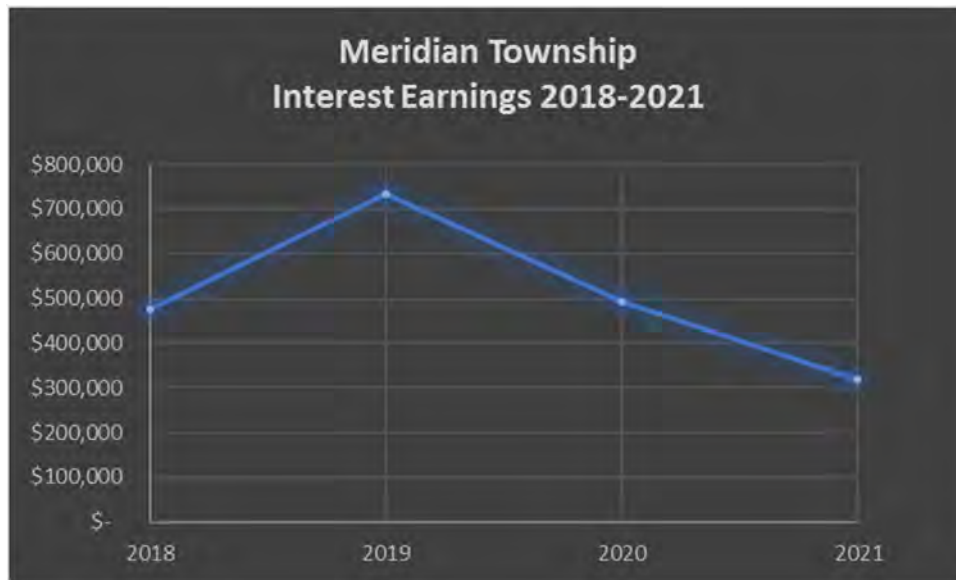
- Total property taxes collected and processed in 2021 were \$109,131,271. This is up \$3.9 million from the \$105,219,167 collected in 2020 and up \$6.2 million from \$102,919,241 collected in 2019.



These receipts were distributed to our local school districts, Ingham County, Lansing Community College (LCC), Capital Area Transit Authority (CATA), Capital Area District Library (CADL) and the Capital Region Airport Authority (CRAA). Meridian Township operations received approximately 20% of the tax collection in 2021.

Non-tax receipts in 2021 totaled \$20,869,800. These receipts include federal grants, revenue sharing from the State of Michigan, along with other permits, and fees. Also included in this is four million in Road Bonds that matured to pay for our 2021 Local Road Improvement Program. In 2020, \$13,436,311 was collected in non-tax receipts.

- Total delinquent personal property taxes collected in 2021 was \$95,808, up from \$38,216 collected in 2020.
- There were no new bankruptcies/receiverships filed by businesses in Meridian Township in 2022, down from ten bankruptcies in 2020. At the end of 2021, \$36,219 in delinquent personal property taxes due to bankruptcies were owed, compared to \$37,198.27 in 2020. At the end of 2021, \$4,262.61 was written off as uncollectable for years 2014 and 2015 through an Ingham County Circuit Court judgement.
- Investment income for 2021 was \$318,515 in earnings from all investments. This is down from the \$492,180 in investment income in 2020, \$733,404 earned in 2019, and comparable to the 476,676 earned in 2018. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, rates for certificates of deposits and money market investments have remained very low. In April of 2020, dividend rates fell to .15% (15 basis points) where they remained throughout 2021.



- The Treasurer’s staff worked with the Finance Director to continue to implement our new on-line payment system, Invoice Cloud. The Invoice Cloud on-line payments portal provides more options for electronic payments for our residents, without any additional costs to our tax and utility payers. In the past year, the move to Invoice Cloud in 2019 saved Meridian Township over \$50,000 in bank fees and other costs associated with the previous on-line payment system.
- The Treasurer invested the 2019 Meridian Road Bond proceeds of \$10,804,047 in 12 certificates of deposit with maturity dates matching the expected payouts for road work over the first three years of the Meridian Township road improvement plan.
- The Treasurer served as a Township Board member and attended semi-monthly meetings, and presented quarterly and special reports to the Township Board on investments, collections and expenditures.
- In 2020 the Treasurer’s staff worked closely with other Township departments and organizations:
  - Assisted the assessor with various Tax Tribunal property tax appeal cases.
  - Assisted the Finance Director with approval of paperwork for audit purposes.
  - Served on the Meridian Township Pension Board.
  - Assisted the Meridian Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA).
  - Served as the Treasurer of the Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC).
  - Board Member of the Capital Area Transit Authority (CATA).
  - Member of the two service clubs: Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs of Haslett & Okemos.
  - Board Member of the Capital Area Treasurers Association (CAT).

Residents can receive free tax information on their own property by using the Township website ([www.meridian.mi.us](http://www.meridian.mi.us)) or calling the Treasurer’s Office at (517) 853-4140

### TEAM MEMBERS

Phil Deschaine, Treasurer  
 Deanne Muliatt, Deputy/Assistant to the Treasurer  
 Stephaney Guild, Bookkeeper