

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2022 **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Township Hall Room
TUESDAY, February 15th, 2022 **6:00 pm**

PRESENT: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Wisinski, Sundland

ABSENT: Supervisor Styka

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer, Fire Chief Hamel, Chief of Police Plaga, Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt, Human Resources Director Tithof, IT Director Gebes, Economic Development Director Clark

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Manager Walsh called the meeting to order and announced the passing of Supervisor Styka. Manager Walsh stated Supervisor Styka's family wished for tonight's meeting to continue normally.

Manager Walsh explained Supervisor Styka had worked in public service for over 30 years. He served on the Okemos School Board for nearly 20 years, was elected as a Township Trustee in 2012, and then as Township Supervisor in 2016, a seat he won again in 2020. He spent 40 years serving the Attorney General's office and worked with the Knights of Columbus, the Okemos Education Foundation, St. Martha's Church and many more. He was a proud graduate of Cass Tech High School, and the University of Michigan's Law School. Above all else Supervisor Styka valued his family, and his community and there was very little that could stop him from making the world a better place for both. Oh behalf of all township staff Manager Walsh gave his condolences to Supervisor Styka's family as they feel a loss that will affect us all.

Trustee Wisinski moved to have Trustee Jackson serve as Supervisor Pro-Tem for the meeting. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Wisinski, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Clerk Guthrie
NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Pro Tem Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Introduction of New Police Officer-Kyle Cornell

Chief of Police Plaga introduced returning officer Kyle Cornell to the board.

Mr. Cornell thanked the board for the opportunity to serve Meridian Township.

B. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding Presentation

Deputy Manager Perry introduced Jeff Brown from Fishbeck to the board who gave a presentation on American Rescue Plan funding and how it may be used.

C. 2021 Township Annual Report

Manager Walsh stated he has nothing to add to the Annual Report, but that it is available at both local libraries and online at:

<https://www.meridian.mi.us/home/showdocument?id=24445&t=637798486045270000>

D. Special Acknowledgement-Dan Opsommer

The Township Board thanked former Trustee Opsommer for his service to Meridian Township. The board wished him well in his new position as the Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer

Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer thanked the board and stated he is looking forward to continuing his service with Meridian Township in his new role.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Pro Tem Jackson Opened Public Remarks at 6:28 pm.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Dr. Haslett, MI spoke in opposition of agenda item 12.E.

Steve Vagnozzi, 2144 Woodfield Rd. Okemos, MI spoke in support of agenda item 12.E.

Younes Ishraidi, 403 W. Madison St. Dewitt, MI Spoke in support of agenda item 12.E.

Michael Osborn, 1494 Forest Hills Dr. Okemos, MI spoke in opposition of the Daniels Drain Project.

Supervisor Pro Tem Jackson Closed Public Remarks at 6:45 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh addressed agenda item 12.E. He explained why he chose the hiring process he used to fill the Deputy Manager/Director of Engineering and Public Works position.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine

- Attended Xavier DeGroat Autism Foundation ribbon cutting ceremony

- Thanked Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer for his service on the board

Trustee Wisinski

- National Wetlands day was February 2nd
- Emma Campbell has started wetlands walks on Wednesdays from 5-6:30 pm, the next will be on March 2nd at Tihart preserve
- Green grant proposals were due today, three have been received
- Congratulated Derek Perry for his new position at Marshall, and congratulated Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer for his new position at Meridian Township.

Clerk Guthrie

- The Community Resource Commission is holding a fundraiser for Meridian Cares at Chipotle on Wednesday, February 3rd
- The Election Commission is meeting next week on Wednesday February 23rd to split a precinct that nearly exceeds the maximum amount of registered voters, and to potentially redraw some precinct lines to maximize election efficiency
- Gave her condolences to Supervisor Styka's family
- Congratulated Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer for his new role in the Township

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson

- Thanked Mr. Perry for his service to Meridian Township and wished him well in his new position

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson reviewed the Consent Agenda.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

A. Communications

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

B. Approval of Minutes – January 25, 2022 Regular Meeting

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve and ratify the minutes of January 25, 2022 as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

C. Bills

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

Common Cash	\$	798,354.58
Public Works	\$	307,794.07
Trust & Agency	\$	<u>6,652.65</u>
Total Checks	\$	1,112,801.30
Credit Card Transactions	\$	20,005.52
09/16/2021 to 09/29/2021		
Total Purchases	\$	<u>1,132,806.82</u>
ACH Payments	\$	<u>1,558,400.22</u>

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

D. Ratification of Two New Firefighter/Paramedics

Treasurer Deschaine moved to authorize the Fire Department to appoint Jared Gentner and Michael Weber to Full-Time Paramedic/Firefighter. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

E. Quarterly Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the Treasurer's Quarterly Report as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS-NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Meridian Redevelopment Fund Grant Committee

Director Clark outlined the Meridian Redevelopment Fund Grant Committee.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to support the request from the Meridian Economic Development Corporations for the Township Supervisor Pro-Tem to appoint Township Trustees to the Village of Okemos, LLC Redevelopment Fund Grant Committee. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson Suggested herself and Treasurer Deschaine to fill the roles in this sub-committee.

Clerk Guthrie asked if it must be Trustees that fill these roles or if any board member could be appointed to this sub-committee.

Manager Walsh explained the board is technically called the "Township Board of Trustees" and any member of the board may fill these rolls.

Treasurer Deschaine withdrew his previous motion.

Trustee Wisinski moved to support the request from the Meridian Economic Development Corporations for the Township Supervisor Pro-Tem to appoint Township Trustees Deschaine and Jackson to the Village of Okemos, LLC Redevelopment Fund Grant Committee. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Wisinski, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

B. Corridor Improvement Authority Reappointment

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson outlined the Corridor Improvement Authority Reappointment.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to reappoint Bruce Peffers to the Corridor Improvement Authority for a 4 year term ending 2/1/2026. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

C. Zoning Board of Appeals Appointments

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson outlined the Zoning Board of Appeals Appointments.

Trustee Wisinski moved to approve the appointment made by Supervisor Styka of James Koenig to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term ending 12/31/2022. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

Trustee Wisinski moved to approve the appointment made by Supervisor Styka of Phil Deschaine, as Township Board representative, to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term ending 12/31/2024. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

D. Board Liaison Appointments to the Transportation Commission and Land Preservation Advisory Board

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson outlined the Board Liaison Appointments to the Transportation Commission and Land Preservation Advisory Board

Clerk Guthrie moved to approve the appointment made by Supervisor Styka of Courtney Wisinski, as Board Liaison, to the Land Preservation Advisory Board for a term ending 12/31/2024. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

Clerk Guthrie moved to approve the appointment made by Supervisor Styka of Kathy Sundland, as Board Liaison, to the Transportation Commission for a term ending 12/31/2024. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

E. Waiver of Personnel Handbook Section P

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson outlined the Waiver of Personnel Handbook Section P.

Manager Walsh explained that due to the scope of ongoing projects he felt it was in the township's best interest to expedite the hiring process of Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer so that he may work with Mr. Perry for a week and easily pick up where he left off without any gap in service.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the township manager's recommendation to forgo posting the position of Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works as described in section P of the Meridian Township Personnel Policy Manual. The purpose of this modification is to allow for one week of overlap between the outgoing Deputy Township Manager and the incoming Assistant Township Manager. Further, this appointment will allow the newly appointed Assistant Township Manager an opportunity to immediately begin overseeing project management such as the long term closure of Okemos Road. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

The board unanimously spoke in support of Manager Walsh's hiring process to fill the Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering position.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Township Damage Assessment Plan

Fire Chief Hamel outlined the Township Damage Assessment Plan for discussion.

The board discussed the Township Damage Assessment Plan with Chief Hamel.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson stated this item would come back next meeting for final adoption.

Chief Engineer Ishraidi spoke in support of the Township Damage Assessment Plan.

B. Harkness Law Firm Contract

Manager Walsh outlined the Harkness Law Firm Contract for discussion.

Chief Plaga spoke highly of Mr. Harkness and the service he has provided the township over the years.

Treasurer Deschaine asked Chief Plaga if his department would be impacted if the township changed prosecuting attorneys.

Chief Plaga replied that it would cause some disruption in his department as they have worked with Mr. Harkness seamlessly for years.

Treasurer Deschaine asked Mr. Harkness if he intends to provide the same level of service to the township should his contract be renewed.

Mr. Harkness replied yes.

Clerk Guthrie discussed with Mr. Harkness his role in the township.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson stated the boards options are to either seek a request for proposals for prosecutorial services or to extend the contract with Mr. Harkness by implementing section 28 of the current contract.

Treasurer Deschaine and Trustee Wisinski spoke in support of extending the current contract with Mr. Harkness.

C. Township Trustee Appointment Process

Manager Walsh outlined the Township Trustee Appointment Process for discussion. He explained that first, a three member Application Review Committee will be created to review applications. On February 16th the township will announce they are seeking to appoint a new Trustee and will announce the process in which a Trustee will be selected. The deadline for applicants will be March 4th. On March 8th the Application Review Committee will convene and decide who will be interviewed. On March 15th the selected candidates will be interviewed by the board as a whole and a new Trustee will be selected.

Clerk Guthrie moved to suspend the rules so the board may take action on this item tonight. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

Clerk Guthrie moved that the Township Board adopts the "process for appointing a new Township Trustee" including the appointment of Trustees Jackson, Wisinski, and Sundland as the Application Review Committee, and adopts the "Application for Meridian Township trustee candidate questionnaire". Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

D. Fire Ordinance Update

Director Schmitt outlined the Fire Ordinance Update for discussion. He explained the ordinance update will require all fire hydrants have the same connection for fire hoses. He further explained whenever work is done on a building, the ordinance would require the nearest hydrant be updated.

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson asked who would be responsible for paying for fire hydrant updates.

Director Schmitt replied the applicant performing work near the hydrant would be paying for the updated connection piece.

Trustee Wisinski asked what the connector piece does.

Chief Hamel explained it will allow the fire department to connect to hydrants quicker, saving valuable time in emergency situations.

Clerk Guthrie asked how much time these connectors save.

Chief Hamel replied it saves a couple minutes.

E. Community Services Millage

Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer outlined the Community Services Millage for discussion. He stated that staff recommend a simple renewal of the current Millage. He noted the ballot language deadline for the August 2nd 2022 is May 10th.

The board discussed the Community Service Millage with Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson Opened Public Remarks at 8:33 pm.

NONE

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson Closed Public Remarks at 8:33 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine

- Taxes were due February 15th, if your struggling to pay your taxes please contact his office and they will help however they can

Assistant Township Manager and Director of Public Works and Engineering Opsommer

- Okemos Rd. Southbound over the Red Cedar River is closed. Residents will only be able to travel as far as Clinton St. before being forced to take a detour.

Trustee Wisinski

- February 26th special event put on by Environmental Commission at the Market Place on the green. They will be having compost bin sales, and pots and pans for people that may need them. They will also be selling upcycled products
- March 2nd the Energy Team is kicking off “Solarize Meridian” which seeks to identify solar incentives, organize neighborhood workshops and create educational outreach materials

Clerk Guthrie

- Highly encourages voters to vote absentee in both 2022 elections

16. CLOSED SESSION- Motion to go into closed session to discuss a written confidential legal opinion from the township attorney regarding the Winslow Mobile Home Park

Treasurer Deschaine moved to go into closed session to discuss a written confidential legal opinion from the township attorney regarding the Winslow Mobile Home Park. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Sundland, Wisinski, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

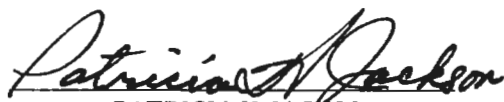
Motion carried: 5-0

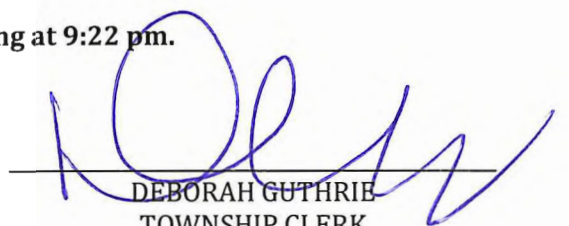
17. ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried 5-0

Supervisor Pro-Tem Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:22 pm.


 PATRICIA H. JACKSON,
 TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR PRO-TEM


 DEBORAH GUTHRIE
 TOWNSHIP CLERK