

Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police  
MICHIGAN LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCREDITATION PROGRAM



# Onsite Final Report



**Meridian Township Police Department**  
**December 8-9, 2022**

**Team Leader: Heather Bromley**  
**Team Member: Leah Bronson**



**A. Agency Name, CEO and AM:**

Meridian Township Police Department  
5151 Marsh Road; Okemos, MI 48864  
(517) 853-4800



Ken Plaga  
Chief of Police



Captain Rick Grillo  
Accreditation Manager



Sergeant Curtice Squires  
Assistant Accred. Manager

**B. Dates of On-Site Assessment:**

Thursday December 8, 2022 – Friday December 9, 2022

**C. Assessment Team:**

Team Leader: Heather Bromley, Executive Sergeant  
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Team Member: Leah Bronson, Lieutenant  
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## **D. Community and Agency Profile:**

### **1. Community History**

Meridian Township was first settled by pioneers in 1836. In November 1836, Obed Marshall purchased 180 acres of land near present-day Haslett. The earliest settlers located at Pine Lake (now Lake Lansing) and made use of the numerous stands of pines to build their cabins. The lake was later the site of a Spiritualist Meeting Camp led by John Haslett. During the late 19th century, the lake became known as a local vacation area served by an "interurban trolley" which ran from the City of Lansing to the resort on the south side of the lake. An amusement park was introduced and enjoyed immense popularity into the mid-20th century. Currently, the Village of Haslett is located at the south side of Lake Lansing.

The first settlers near the current Village of Okemos (to the south of the former Pine Lake) were Sanford Marsh and his wife who built their cabin in 1839. They were soon followed by Joseph Kilbourne, who took out land for his brother-in-law, Freeman Bray. It was Bray who platted out the southeast corner of his land and sold the lots to newcomers traveling into the mid-state wilderness. The village was first known as Hamilton.

A local Native American, Chief John Okemos, was well known throughout the area. The village area was one of his primary camping areas and he traveled frequently between the village and another campsite near present-day Portland, Michigan. In 1857, the Michigan Legislature changed the name of the village officially to Okemos to honor the old chief.

The Township is rich with history and one resident, Joseph Kilbourne, had a major role in the decision in 1847 to relocate the state capitol from Detroit to Lansing (then Lansing Township). A local organization, the Friends of Historic Meridian, has an archive of local historic information and also maintains the historic buildings in the Meridian Historical Village.

In October of 1959, the Township gained the name "Charter" in its title due to the potential of facing serious sewage control problems and the inability of the present form of government. By becoming a Charter Township, the growing community would have a government with additional powers, including increased flexibility within the organizational structure, greater tax authority, and protection of the Township's boundaries against annexation.

The Meridian Mall opened in 1969. The mall originally featured the J.W. Knapp Company and Woolco as its anchor stores, and underwent many expansions in its history. Expansions in 1982 and 1987 added two more wings of stores anchored by Hudson's (now Macy's) and Mervyn's. Further renovations at the beginning of the 21st century relocated the food court while also adding Galyan's (now Dick's Sporting Goods) and several other big-box stores. Meridian Mall features about 125 stores and a food court, plus a movie theater on its periphery. The mall's anchor stores are J. C. Penney, Macy's, and Dick's Sporting Goods. Other major tenants include Bed Bath & Beyond, H&M, Launch Trampoline, Old Navy, Planet Fitness, and Schuler Books & Music. Meridian Mall is owned and managed by CBL Properties, which has owned it since 1998.

### **2. Community Profile**

The community of Meridian Township lies along the eastern border of East Lansing and the campus of Michigan State University and in close proximity to the Michigan State Capitol.



Centrally located in the palm of Michigan’s hand, Meridian Township has nestled within its borders two healthy and active communities; Haslett and Okemos. A smaller portion of the Township is comprised of East Lansing and Williamston mailing addresses.

Founded in the early 1800’s along the Red Cedar River as a trading point, Meridian Township residents enjoy quiet, safe, and well maintained connected neighborhoods with plenty of parks, pathways, and recreational opportunities for visitors and families to enjoy. With natural beauty on roads, interurban pathways, and vibrant business districts, Meridian Township is a great atmosphere for families, seniors, and young professionals.

A destination for raising families since before the turn of the century, Meridian Township offers an array of quiet neighborhoods and an abundance of natural beauty with four seasons of outdoor activities.

With a park system that has over 904 acres of park land in 29 parks and natural areas, Meridian Township welcomes visitors from surrounding areas to its parks and to the largest lake within 25 miles of the State Capitol, Lake Lansing.

**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 was decreased as compared to 2020. Citizen surveys are mailed out every year. Past data is available upon request.

**Citizen Satisfaction Survey for Sworn Personnel**

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

**3. Township Demographics**

**Race and Hispanic Origin (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020)**

White alone	71.9%
African American alone	5.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.4%
Asian alone	15.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%
Two or More Races	6.8%
Hispanic or Latino	4.5%

**4. Agency History and Profile**

Ingham County Sheriff’s Department deputies were assigned to patrol Meridian Township prior to 1950. In 1948, Deputies Milton Lamb, Ted Davis, and Theodore Dorriell were assigned to patrol Meridian Township. On April 13, 1950, the Township Board moved to obtain police protection from the Sheriff’s department. The Township asked the Sheriff to make the selection of deputies and the township reimbursed the Sheriff’s department at the rate of \$250.00 per month.



The retail presence in Meridian Township began in 1969, with the opening of both the Meridian Mall and the new Meijer store in time for Christmas. The current Municipal Building was constructed in 1972, and the Township offices, including the police department, re-located from the corner of Haslett and Okemos Roads. The police department was located where HOMTV offices are now.

By the mid-1970's, the Meridian Division had become essentially independent, relying on the Sheriff for arrest powers, radios, vehicle equipment, and uniforms. The deputies assigned to Meridian Township were township employees, the patrol cars were owned by the township, and the deputies worked out of the Township Hall. Meridian Township even established its own records office independent from the Sheriff's department.

Subdivisions were expanding rapidly, and citizens of Meridian Township wanted accountability from their officers. If a citizen was unhappy with police service, they had to call the Sheriff's Department in Mason. The Township board unanimously passed a resolution in the fall of 1979 to create the Meridian Township Police Department. This resolution became effective on December 15, 1979. Twenty-four deputies were sworn in as the first Meridian officers. By 1988, the department grew to 28 sworn members.

The current public safety building was constructed and dedicated in 1992. The building was patterned after a Wisconsin city's department.

Perhaps the most significant change during the history of the MTPD was the advent of Public Safety. In February of 1996, the Township Board voted to consolidate the Police and Fire departments. The goal was to improve service and cut costs for the citizens of the township. New hires dually trained in police and fire academies were sought. Current officers were sent to the fire academy. Public Safety did not work well for the Township, and the departments separated back into police and fire in 1997.

The department grew to its largest size and budget just prior to the recession of 2008, at 45 sworn and a budget of over 5 million dollars. Layoffs were avoided during the recession through attrition. Beginning January 1, 2011 Meridian Township entered into an agreement with Williamstown Township to provide police services. As a result of the contract, the Township Board authorized hiring one additional patrol officer.

## **5. Agency Mission & Values**

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.

### **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.

**6. Agency Demographics**

The Meridian Township Police Department is staffed in totality with 52 employees (40 sworn and 12 non-sworn).

**Gender**

Male	Female
29	23

**Race/Ethnicity**

Native American / Alaska Native	1
Asian	0
African American	0
Middle Eastern	0
European	1
Hispanic	6
White	44

The agency is actively participating in the [30X30 Initiative](#). Housed in NYU’s Policing Project, the objective is: By 2030, 30% of sworn law enforcement will be female. The Policing Project indicates, “social science research strongly suggests the advancement of women officers is associated with improved outcomes for both policing agencies and the communities they serve.” [WLIX 10](#) covered the expansion of the female lockerroom to meet this goal while assessors were on-site.

As of December 12, 2022, the agency now has eleven (11) sworn female officers and twenty-seven (27) sworn male officers bringing them very close to their goal of 30% women on their sworn law enforcement workforce!

**7. CEO Biography**

Ken Plaga has worked for the Meridian Township Police Department since 1995. Prior to joining the Meridian Township Police Department, he worked as a Public Safety Officer for Blackman Township. Ken holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University and a Master’s in Public Administration from Western Michigan University. Ken is also a graduate of the 229th Session of the FBI National Academy and the Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command. Ken has served in many positions including Field Training Officer, Investigator, Patrol Sergeant, Administrative Sergeant, Services Division Commander, and Uniform Division Commander and Assistant Chief. Ken was appointed to the Chief of Police position in July of 2018. Ken instructs undergraduate classes for Michigan State University in the field of criminal investigations and police supervision.



## 8. Accreditation Manager Profile

Captain Rick Grillo obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice in 2002. Rick began his career in 2003 with the Meridian Township Police Department as a road patrol Officer. During his time as an Officer, he worked several assignments including Field Training Officer, Chairman of the Police Advisory Committee, DARE and School Resources Officer, and three years as an Investigator. Rick was promoted to Sergeant in 2015 where he took over as the Field Training Program Coordinator and supervised a road patrol platoon on night shift. Rick was promoted to Lieutenant in 2018 and named the Services Division Commander. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in May 2021. He currently oversees the investigations unit, court services, records unit, evidence and property room, and the cadet program. Rick is the Accreditation Manager for MTPD. Rick graduated from the Michigan State University School of Staff and Command in 2017 and was a class facilitator in 2020.

Rick grew up in Grand Haven and has been married to his wife Sarah for 19 years. They have two children, Emma (11) and Russell (9).

## 9. Assistant Accreditation Manager Profile

Sergeant Curtice Squires started out working for the Meridian Township Police Department as a cadet while attending Lansing Community College in 1997. He was hired as a Police Officer in 1999. During his time at the Meridian Township Police Department, Curtice has served as a Field Training Officer, a Firearms Instructor, an Active Violence Incident Instructor, did a three year assignment as a plain clothes Investigator, and was a member of the County SRT team for 19 years. He was the department's Court Services Officer when he was promoted to Sergeant in December of 2021. Curtice is currently a Uniform Patrol Supervisor on night shift. He maintains his duties as the agency's senior Firearms Instructor and weapons armorer, heads up the Uniform Committee and is a member of the Retention Committee. Curtice was designated the Co-Accreditation Manager shortly after his promotion to Sergeant.

Curtice has been married for 22 years to his wife, Melanie, and they have two children, Fox (21) and Cambria (18).

## 10. Future Issues

The Meridian Township Police Department continues their efforts in recruitment and is working diligently to meet their goal of 30% female officers on their roster by 2030.

## E. Public Information Activities:

Public notice and input are cornerstones of democracy and MLEAC accreditation. This section reports on the community's opportunity to comment on their law enforcement agency and to bring matters to the attention of the commission that otherwise may be overlooked.

### 1. Telephone Contacts

The public telephone line was active on Friday, December 9, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

#### **John Hood = Superintendent for Okemos School District**

Superintendent Hood values the partnership around safety for students and schools. There is a personal service from the officers serving the schools. He describes the relationship between the District and MTPD as strong with some areas



still growing. Students continue to be educated about the services and operation so of the MTPD and grow to understand police and community interactions.

**Steve Cook = Superintendent of Haslett Schools**

Superintendent Cook works closely with the MTPD and especially the school resource officer. He describes the SRO and all officers, as available to deal with a variety of issues. They also offer a variety of education to include DARE and the offering of general education with young people. MTPD works with principals on discipline, traffic and event security support while coordinating the crossing guard program. Mr. Cook works with the Chief regularly to partner on issues as they arise. Emergency planning is partnered, while being a coordinated and collaborated, with staff for response. The MTPD has a quick response for emergency needs. The District is working to review a full-time, funded FTE for a SRO.

**Cullen Harkness = Community Member,  
Meridian Township Prosecuting Attorney**

MTPD is one of the most professional policing agencies in the County/State. The agency interacts well with the community. Their officers professionally present cases for review.

PA Harkness appreciates the services offered by the agency, including their home check program.

**Joyce Van Coevering = Community Resident**

As an active member, and resident, of the community Ms. Van Coevering describes the MTPD as providing excellent service.

**Janet Lillie = Community Resident,  
MSU Asst Vice President for Community Relations**

Dr. Lillie serves as assistant vice president for community relations at Michigan State University. In this role she connects MSU with community, business, and municipal leaders across the Greater Lansing Region on initiatives that advance mutual interests.

Special challenges exist relating to many MSU students living in the community. The agency members work closely with those members of MSU to work in service to students. They are responsive to the unique needs of students and the opportunities the University has to alert the campus while also helping connect students to resources and services on campus (i.e. mental health services, non-policing issues). MTPD acknowledges and supports the networked set of resources available to connect students and to best provide the individual resources needed. There is a strong engaged partnership, especially in high-risk students, to promote and effect safety strategies.

Dr. Lille shares that there is a terrific relationship including MSU Police and Meridian Township Police Department – open for opportunities to around engagement and discussions on how to best service the population of affiliates living, working and learning in the area of Meridian Township. They enjoy a very strong relationship and ongoing direct communication.

As a resident of the community, Dr. Lillie describes the services of the Meridian Township Police Department as exemplary.

**2. Social Media Response**

There was no social media response

**3. Correspondence**

There was no written coorespondence received.





**4. Media Interest**

There were no inquiries from the media to assessors regarding the on-site.

**5. Community Outreach Contacts**

While on-site, assessors met with the following Meridian Township employees:

**Frank Walsh, Township Manager**

The Township Manager's Office serves as the [Administration](#) of the Township. Works directly with the Township Board and various Departments of Meridian Township.

The Township Manager's Office is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Township; budget preparation and administration, personnel, public service, public safety, public works, parks and recreation and community relations. Department Directors report directly to the Township Manager. Manager Walsh supports the MTPD in their re-accreditation process.

**Abbigail Tithof, Human Resource Director**

The [Human Resources Department](#) handles all postings of employment opportunities with the Township and provides information to all employees regarding benefits and policies and procedures.

Director Tithof supports the MTPD in their re-accreditation process.

Assessors also met with a [Meridian Township Board](#) member:

**Patricia Herring Jackson, elected Township Supervisor**

The Township Board is elected by the people every four years comprised of seven members; Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer and four Trustees. The Supervisor chairs the Township Board meetings and the Board appoints a Township Manager to oversee Township operations.

Board members elected, serve four-year terms in the Presidential Election year. The current Board member's office commenced on November 20, 2020 and will expire on November 20, 2024. The Board is responsible for enacting ordinances, allocation and approval of budget, levying millage and other items authorized by State Statute. Supervisor Jackson supports the MTPD in their re-accreditation process.

**6. Agency Ride-along**

MTPD Officer Megan Cole provided Assessor Bromley with a ride along experience. Officer Cole joined the agency as a cadet and in May of 2021 was sworn in as a police officer. As a new officer she completed a 50-hour in-house orientation prior to successful completion of a 14-week field training program.

Officer Cole provided a tour of the service area around Meridian township. She responded to a home alarm and fielded a telephone report. Officer Cole was professional in her service both in-person and over the telephone. An overview of equipment and operations and was observed and reflecte compliance to agency policy/procedure and program standards.

**7. Agency Services and Community Involvement**

The Meridian Township Police Department has multiple areas of community involvement. Examples of some of these services and engagement activites are listed below.

### **Community Policing**



Community policing is the backbone of our operations as made evident by our Mission Statement as well as the wording on our patch. Community comes first in the Meridian Township Police Department. Every officer in the department is assigned to multiple neighborhoods throughout the township as soon as they complete the Shadow Phase of FTO. Each neighborhood has a volunteer to be a "neighborhood leader" who acts as a liaison between the officer and the neighborhood. The expectation is that officers will have personal contact with their neighborhood leader at least once a month. The officers submit a report to the Chief every month documenting their contacts with the neighborhood leaders as well as discussing any crimes or concerns the

leaders have. Because of this, every citizen has a police officer assigned to their specific neighborhood and they can reach out to them when they need something.

### **Neighborhood Leaders Meetings**



MTPD has quarterly meetings with their neighborhood leaders. Three times a year, the neighborhood leaders are invited to come to the Town Hall and gather for a meeting to discuss things going on in their neighborhood. They usually have a special guest talk about things of special interest at the meeting. For instance, when traffic construction is being planned, a representative from the Road Department is asked to

come in and talk to the leaders about the plan as well as the anticipated impact on their neighborhood. The Command Staff facilitates this meeting and a lot of officers also attend to mingle with the neighborhood leaders. Generally, there are about 70 people in attendance. During Covid, these meetings were held virtually via Zoom.

### **National Night Out**



The agency has participated in NNO for over 20 years. They often run out of available patrol vehicles as officers, sergeants, and command officers all come in off-duty to spend time in their assigned neighborhoods. In 2022, there were over 70 neighborhoods that participated. The fire department joins the police department as they go from neighborhood to neighborhood. Cadet dress up in the McGruff the Crime Dog costumes and MTPD deploys motorcycles, canine, and other special equipment to their neighborhoods for a fun evening.

### **Faith in Blue**

Faith in Blue is a relatively new event that was inaugurated in 2020. In 2022, three churches in Meridian Township participated in a Faith in Blue event. MTPD sent officers to these places of worship for an afternoon to meet the congregation and connect with the members.



### Cadet Program



The MTPD Cadet Program engages college students interested in learning more about the law enforcement field to work as police cadets. Cadets get 20 hours of work every week and working hours are scheduled around class schedules. Cadets get a firsthand glimpse into law enforcement as MTPD cadets work hand-and-hand with officers daily. The cadet program has been used as a precursor to sponsorship through the police academy and as a gateway to full-time employment as a Meridian Township Police Officer.

### Crossing Guard Program



MTPD coordinates the crossing guard program for schools of the Okemos and Haslett school districts.

### Citizen's Academy

**23rd Annual CITIZENS' ACADEMY**  
 THURSDAYS SEPTEMBER 1 - NOVEMBER 3, 2022  
 6:30 PM TO 9:30 PM | MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

**SOME OF THE COVERED TOPICS INCLUDE:**

UNIFORM PATROL FUNCTIONS	CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS AND CSI
ARREST LAW AND USE OF FORCE	TRAFFIC AND OWI (OPERATING WHILE INTOXICATED)
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS	NARCOTICS
911 DISPATCH CENTER TOUR	FIREARMS TRAINING SIMULATOR
COMMUNITY POLICING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT	K9 PRESENTATION
CRIMINAL LAW AND THE MICHIGAN COURT SYSTEM	

Lectures and active participation will give attendees the opportunity to gain knowledge about the criminal justice system and the Department's role in the community. Past participants have given overwhelming support for the Academy and found it valuable for gaining a better understanding of the importance of Police Officers in the community.

For over 20 years, MTPD has hosted a Citizen's Academy. Every fall, MTPD opens their doors to their community through a 10-week educational course on all things Meridian Police. Participants come to the office every Thursday for a three-hour lesson on various aspects of our department from the hiring and background process, to Crime Scene Investigation, Field Training, Canine, and everything in between. Participants are able to go through a MILO simulator and all are welcome to come in for a ride along at the end of the program.

### Youth Academy

Our youth academy mirrors our Citizen's Academy but is limited to high school students.



### **Halloween Open House**

The MTPD hosts a Halloween Open House every year on the last Saturday before Halloween. The public is invited to come to the station dressed in their costumes for a guided tour. The event lasts three hours and is usually attended by several hundred people. In 2022, approximately 600 people came through our building! Kids and their parents are given a tour and provided the history of the building. They get a demonstration of agency equipment, a CSI demonstration, and a tour of the booking room and holding cells from Chief Plaga. The tour concludes in the parking lot, eating donuts, drinking cider, looking at MTPD patrol cars, looking at the SRT Bearcat, and meeting the agency canine Ares.



### **Shop with a Cop**



MTPD has always participated in a regional Shop with a Cop with agencies from all over Ingham County. In 2018, the agency branched off and partnered with Walmart to host their own Shop with a Cop event. SRO's work with the schools to identify kids in need. In 2022, 13 kids were invited to participate. Officers and cadets volunteered to come in and help. The kids are assigned to an officer or cadet. The kids are dropped off an hour before the event to mingle with the officers. MTPD officers drive them to Walmart and they each are given \$100 to spend at the store. The kids are brought back to the station for pizza, pop, and games while volunteers wrap their presents. They are then sent home with a belly full of pizza and sugar, a bag full of toys, and a smile on their face.

### **Senior Watch Program**



The Meridian Township Police Department is proud to offer a Senior Watch Program. This program was created to assist senior citizens (60 years of age or older) or disabled adults (55+ with a life threatening illness or injury) who reside within the community we serve. The program provides service to residents that live alone with no means or capacity to leave their home, or do not have friends or family immediately available to check on their well-being. This program is intended to provide qualifying residents with a sense of security as well as comfort in knowing that assistance is coming should something happen.



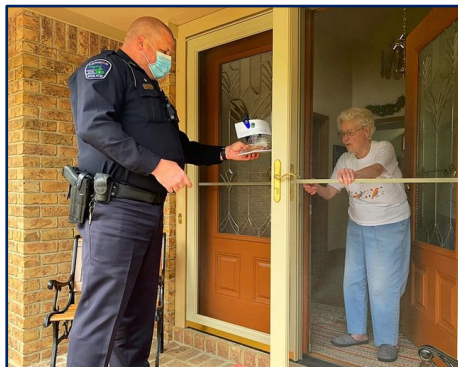
**No Senior Without Christmas**



The Tri-County TRIAD hosts an event for seniors in Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton County every holiday season. Donations are solicited throughout the year and area police officers and fire personnel pick up donated products such as toothbrushes, hygiene products, food, and other items and bring them to a central location. The officers then pack the items into individual gift baskets and deliver them to seniors in our area.

In 2022, MTPD delivered approximately 20 baskets to seniors in our community who were in need.

**Police Grams (during covid)**



During covid, we recognized a lot of people were living alone and were shut in for weeks, sometimes, months, at a time with very little human interaction. MTPD came up with the idea to deliver goodies to their residents and spend a little bit of time talking to them face to face (while social distancing with masks on of course). Agency members worked with neighborhood leaders to identify people who were unable to leave their residences in each neighborhood.

They partnered with Great Harvest Bread who provided cookies for the Police Grams. They put various MTPD items like coffee cups and chip clips in the Police Gram and officers delivered them.

**No Shave November**



Agency policy does not allow for beards unless an exception is made by the Chief. Four years ago, the agency decided to participate in the No Shave November campaign and allow officers to grow beards during the month as long as they donated to Meridian Cares, the township-sponsored social services organization that provides residents assistance with paying their bills. Over the past four years, agency members have raised thousands of

dollars for the program by soliciting donations from the officers and the public. It has become so successful Chief Plaga has now extended No Shave November to No Shave October-February! Area businesses have donated gift cards which are raffled off to the female officers who do not participate in No Shave November.

**Breast Cancer Awareness Month**



In commemoration of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, officers are encouraged to wear pink undershirts under their uniforms. Pink ribbon pins were purchased for all officers to wear during October.



**Honor Guard**



The MTPD Honor Guard consists of five members and has presented the colors at several events, including high school football games, awards ceremonies, and the Michigan Township Association annual meeting.

**Crime Mapping & Community Alerts**



The MTPD offers crime mapping, [available on-line](https://www.crimemapping.com/map/agency/452).

Individuals may sign up to receive alerts at <https://www.crimemapping.com/map/agency/452>.

**Canine Program**



The MTPD has a canine program in service the the community. K-9 Ares joined the agency in March of 2020 and is partnered with his handler Officer Blaine Anderson.

**F. Essential Services:**

**Chapter 1 – The Administrative Function:**

**Direction of Personnel**

The Chief of Police has the sole authority to issue, modify, and approve agency written directives. The agency uses Power DMS for their accreditation documentation which includes their written directive system. The overall written directive system was clear and understandable. The directives were constructed in a logical manner with employee duties and responsibilities clearly defined, including constraints on employee actions and expectations.

**Fiscal Control**

The agency previously mainted two cash accounts (one in Records and one at the Front Desk). In early 2022 the agency moved to a cashless system. Monies are now collected at the Township Treasurer’s Office and a receipt is presented to the agency.

**Internal Affairs**

Internal Affairs is the responsibility of the office of the Chief. The Chief is responsible for the direction and control of the investigation of citizen complaints and the department’s internal affairs function. If assigned an internal affairs investigation, the command officer will have the authority to report directly to the CEO. The agency accepts and investigates all complaints against the agency or its employees, including anonymous complaints.

A supervisor may relieve an employee from duty in severe cases. Examples of situations where such action may be deemed appropriate would be a complaint of a very serious nature or an



emergency circumstance. The initial suspension will be with full pay and requires immediate notification of the Chief of Police.

**Citizen Service Complaint Summary**

	2020 (6)	2021 (5)	2022 (5)
Sustained	3	1	2
Not Sustained	1	2	1
Exonerated	2	2	1
Unfounded	0	0	2

The Disciplinary Process

The agency’s written directive system details the rules, regulations and expectations for employee conduct. The agency is well-disciplined and has procedures to apply training and counseling in lieu of punitive employee discipline. The agency’s disciplinary procedure includes corrective actions for minor complaints, which include verbal warning and notice of infraction. The agency has an appropriate appeal and grievance process in place with established timelines

Organization

All sworn personnel take, sign and subsequently abide by an oath of office to enforce the law and uphold the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Michigan, and faithfully perform duties of police officer for the Charter Township of Meridian. All agency personnel acknowledge a code of ethics and receive ethics training. Bias-influenced policing is strictly prohibited by the agency. There is a clear definition for bias-influenced policing, including but not limited to race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, cultural group or any identifiable groups. There were no reported incidents violating the policy during the accreditation cycle.

The agency also prohibits unlawful workplace violence, discrimination, and harassment, including sexual harassment, threats, physical attack or property damage. The directive requires employees to report any type of harassment and requires investigations to be conducted in accordance with state law. The Human Resources Department Director investigates all allegations of workplace harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment.

The police personnel have structured unity of command. The Chief of Police is supported by a Captain. The Meridian Township Police Department is organized into three components: Office of the Chief of Police, Uniform Division and Services Division. A Commander has direct operational control over the Uniform Division and the Services Division Commander oversees the operation of the Services Division. Patrol sections are commonly referred to as platoons. Platoons are responsible for handling the majority of calls for service from the community. The officers are represented by the Police Officers Association of Michigan and the supervisors are represented by the Capital City Labor Union, an off-shoot of the Fraternal Order of Police. In the absence of the CEO, an acting chief of police is appointed from the command staff, usually the Captain or Lieutenant.

Agency Equipment and Property

Agency personnel are responsible for all equipment issued to them or physically under their control. It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain all law enforcement related equipment in an operational state and report any malfunctions, damage, or loss of equipment immediately to their supervisor.

The wearing of body armor is mandatory for all sworn personnel, and there are additional requirements to wear body armor while engaged in pre-planned and high-risk operations. All sworn personnel are responsible for the maintenance of agency-issued equipment.



### Public Information

The Chief will appoint the department Public Information Officer (P.I.O.). The Chief, the PIO or a designee will normally authorize media releases. Although it is the primary responsibility of the Public Information Officer to interact with the media, other members of the Meridian Township Police Department are encouraged to assist members of the media whenever possible

### Agency Records and Computers

The agency has a detailed written directive system describing field reporting, follow-up investigations, and the approval of reports by supervision. The department controls access to agency records electronically with records management passwords. No original reports are removed from the Records Division without the approval of the Chief of Police. Juvenile records are kept separate, and there are extra security measures for non-public records. All freedom of information requests are handled by records personnel, and the agency abides by the state retention and disposal requirements in accordance with Michigan Statute and Records Management.

The agency has procedures to protect its central records. The data is stored and backed up electronically and is password-protected. Annual security audits and password audits were performed during the assessment period. There were no breaches in security during the assessment period.

### Agency Training

The agency has an excellent training plan. The training records are current and are being maintained in accordance with applicable retention schedules. Training course content is outlined, and lesson plans are utilized. In-house instructors are properly trained and experienced. New sworn personnel are required to complete an extensive training program. Field training officers are properly selected and trained. Newly promoted personnel receive training consistent with new responsibilities and tasks. The agency has a remedial training policy and has made use of it.

Specific required annual training topics were properly identified in the written directive. Annual training included firearms, hazmat, use of force, defensive tactics, ethics, legal updates, incident command, and bias-influenced policing.

### Authorization and Use of Agency Weapons and Ammunition

The CEO is the authorizing authority for weapons and ammunition requirements, including specialized weapons and knives. The agency uses certified/qualified staff for armorer inspections, repair and replacement. Records of weapons are properly maintained with written guidelines for storage

## **Chapter 2 – The Personnel Function:**

### Personnel Benefits and Responsibilities

The agency has a written directive outlining an employee assistance program, line-of-duty injury and death circumstance policy, and an employee collision and review process. During the assessment period, there were no serious line of duty injury or death incidents. The agency also has a comprehensive exposure control and reporting policy. Outside employment or business activities of agency employees are prohibited unless specific approval is obtained from the Chief.

### Performance Evaluations

All agency personnel receive documented annual performance evaluations. The performance evaluation system has a well-defined purpose statement with established and defined criteria,





scored on a rating scale. The system also includes directives to raters regarding evaluation responsibilities and procedures on how to use the required forms. Training for evaluators is documented, and the evaluations are maintained according to the department's retention schedule. The evaluation system has a clear appeal process, and no appeals of evaluations occurred during the assessment period.

#### Promotion of Sworn Personnel

The promotional process is detailed in policy. The process includes selection criteria and all scored components of the process will be described prior to the process beginning. An eligibility list is created as defined by the written directive; however, it can be voided at anytime by the Chief of Police.

#### Recruitment of Sworn Personnel

The recruitment plan contains a clear statement that the agency is committed to equal opportunity. The stated goals and objectives for recruitment are clear and understandable. The agency has a recruiting team which continues to attend numerous events.

#### Selection of Personnel

The agency has a complete written process for the selection of new full-time personnel, which includes a thorough background investigation, as well as a medical and psychological exam. The initial selection process includes a written skills test. If they attain a minimum established score they can move on to take additional testing components: Project, Oral Board, Follow Up Activities. Candidates that reach a specified score on the written test and oral interview will move on to the background portion of the process.

The Chief of Police, with approval from the Township Manager, will make the conditional offer to successful candidate(s).

#### Reserve Officers and Civilian Volunteers

The agency does not have a reserve program. The agency does utilize volunteers for parking enforcement however, they have not had any active volunteers during the 2019-2022 time period. The agency does maintain a very detailed written directive pertaining to selection, duties, uniforms, and training of parking enforcement volunteers.

### **Chapter 3 – The Operations Function:**

#### Arrest, Search and Seizure

The Meridian Township Police Department is a full-service agency with arrest powers. The agency and its policies follow the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Michigan in relation to arrest, and search and seizure practices. The agency recognizes the foundation set forth in the Fourth Amendment.

Agency policy outlines the warrantless search exceptions and the need for a court-authorized search warrant, when applicable. The agency takes arrests to the Ingham County jail for processing and housing.

Meridian Township PD has an area in their police building, located off their Sally Port, used for providing Data Master (breathalyzer) tests for Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) arrests. These detention areas are monitored by a centralized camera system. There are emergency buttons nearby, including the officer's prep radio. Department policy dictates that an additional officer is always present during OWI processing.



For arrests, officers utilize the weapons storage lockers to store their weapons before entering any weapons restricted areas within the department.

The agency has a comprehensive strip search and body cavity search policy in place indicating that a search warrant is necessary to conduct such searches, when and where these types of searches are to be conducted, by whom, and by whose authority.

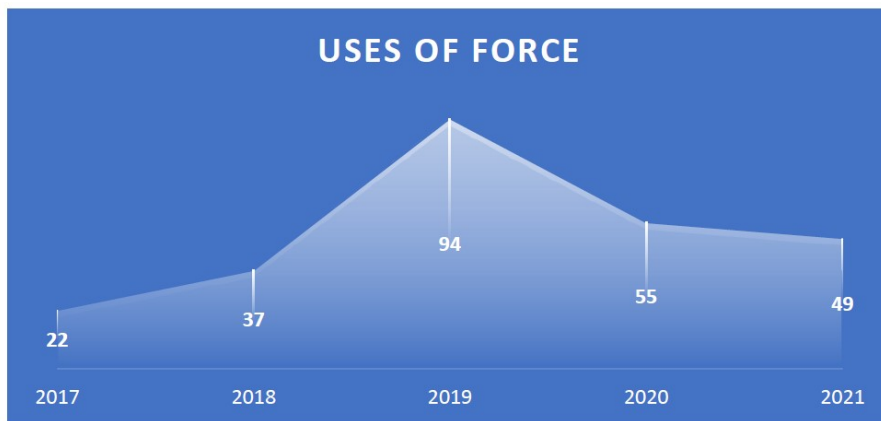
There were no occurrences of either type of search within this accreditation cycle.

### Interview and Interrogation

The Meridian Township PD had established procedures for standards compliance with contemporary criminal procedural requirements related to interviews, investigative detention interviews, and interrogations. The agency has two interview rooms located on the premises including one on the first floor and one in the Investigations Unit. The interrogation rooms are monitored by another detective who has the capabilities of activating an emergency alarm (prep radio). Both interview rooms have audio and video recording capability. The agency's written directive indicates that investigative officers are required to use the agency's audio and video recording capabilities for purposes of recording statements and confessions consistent with state law. The policy also indicates that no more than two officers will be inside an interview room during an interview/interrogation.

### Use of Force

Meridian Township PD officers used force 55 times in 27 incidents in 2020 and 49 times in 27 incidents in 2021. Both years were significantly lower than the 94 times in 39 incidents in 2019. The agency conducts a thorough investigation for each Use of Force incident.



Only one incident in 2020 was found to be outside the agency's policy, which the supervisor determined the officers were too quick to use force and used few tactics to de-escalate the situation. No incidents were found to be outside of policy for 2021. The 2022 analysis was not yet completed and assessors were advised the full analysis would take place in the beginning of 2023, when all data was available.

The agency has a policy in place that any officer involved in the use of deadly force is placed on administrative leave with pay pending further investigation.

### Communications

The Meridian Township PD contracts with the Ingham County 9-1-1 Dispatch Center for its communication needs. The County Dispatch Center is a full-service dispatch authority and the operators are trained in medical emergency dispatching. All recordings are kept in storage for a



one calendar year or unless requested by the department for longer retention. Review of any recordings are limited to personnel with a legitimate and official need.

The Dispatch Center has a back-up generator on-site. The generator will automatically engage if the main power supply is lost thus supplying power to the Dispatch Center to maintain operations. The generator goes through a weekly function test. The Dispatch Center is also equipped with a backup battery power supply system to bridge the gap between the power outage and when the generator begins to provide power. A full load test of the generator is done every month.

### Field Activities

During the accreditation cycle, there were several motor vehicle and foot pursuits within Meridian Township and Williamstown Township. The pursuits originated mostly from minor traffic violations. The Meridian Township PD policy allows for pursuits by officers who must follow the guidelines appropriately outlined the policy.

The department has a review process for each occurrence and an annual analysis is conducted. For 2020, there were six vehicle pursuits. Two of the pursuits were found to have policy violations, such as failure to use siren during the pursuit and for traveling outside the Township limits without authorization. Counseling or discipline was conducted for officers found to be in violation of agency standards. Also for 2020, there were 12 foot pursuits. Only one subject was not apprehended, five subjects were injured and no officers were injured. All foot pursuits were within policy.

In 2021, there were 10 vehicle pursuits. No subjects or officers were injured. Three of the pursuits were found to have policy violations, including failure to siren during the pursuit. Additional training was conducted with all members and discipline was conducted for officers in violation. There were 5 foot pursuits in 2021. All subjects were apprehended, one subject was injured, and no officers were injured. All foot pursuits were met the agency's standards.

Assessors were advised a 2022 analysis will be conducted in 2023 for all pursuits.

The Meridian Township PD has in-car computers available in each patrol vehicle, accessible to each patrol officer. The agency also has video recording equipment in their police vehicles. Each video is downloaded and retained for a designated time period unless there is some evidentiary value to the video, then it is kept until the final disposition of the case is known. All other retention of video follows state guidelines. Officers also keep medical equipment in their vehicles and are trained as medical first responders.

### Traffic Safety and Enforcement

The Meridian Township Police Department has applicable policies in place regarding traffic violation enforcement, enforcement options, offenders, and traffic direction and control. The directive establishes procedures to conduct motor vehicle stops, including high-risk stops. The enforcement options include warnings, citations, and arrest when appropriate. Assessors observed several proofs of compliance to the standards in regard to the wearing of high visibility vests when working traffic details and crash investigations.

### Homeland Security/Critical Incidents

The agency has a critical incident system in place, which includes command, operations, planning, logistics, and fiscal responsibility. The agency did not have any events for 2020 or 2021. The proof provided for 2022 was for a community event, Celebrate Meridian, and the plan was complete, thorough, and utilized the critical incident response system.



## **Chapter 4 – The Investigative Function:**

### Criminal Investigation

Officers perform preliminary investigation from initial contacts. Reports are reviewed by a shift supervisor before being further reviewed by the Investigations Unit Sergeant. If the Investigations Unit sergeant feels the case should be assigned to a detective, they will assign it for case follow up and/or further investigation. Policies are in place for interviewing, interrogation, and eye witness identification.

Assessors interviewed Sgt. Ed Besonen, who was able to answer all investigative questions as it related to policy. He provided details on how cases are assigned and how ensures thorough investigation and case management.

### Crime Scene Processing

The agency has detectives and crime scene investigators available 24/7 and available to investigate a wide range of crimes including fatal or serious injury traffic crashes, homicides, arson, CSC, etc.

Meridian Township PD officers at crime scenes are trained to keep the crime scenes undisturbed unless a danger exists that may destroy or compromise evidence prior to the arrival of detectives and crime scene investigators. Appropriate and standard compliant packaging requirements are in place and chain of custody is appropriately followed and documented.

### Storage of Evidence and Property

Appropriate policies are in place for property processing and evidence collection. The agency has a well-organized and equipped property room with a computerized evidence management system called “The Beast”. Access to the property is limited to the property officer and their command officer. There is a log for all individuals entering and exiting the main and off-site storage facilities, including the MLEAC Assessors during this on-site.

There are several two-way lockers, including large sized, for officers to secure large items of evidence/property until the evidence technicians can remove the property, log the property, then place the property/evidence in the property lockers. Once secured the lockers are only accessed by the property room manager for proper intake and storage.

Meridian Township PD has a storage facility a short drive from the main station. At that location, there is a large vehicle bay utilized for processing vehicles and storing items too large for the lockers. These areas are alarmed. The agency properly stores valuable jewelry, money, and guns. The agency also has a drug disposal policy in place to properly destroy drugs. The agency uses a crematorium located in Grand Rapids for incineration of these items.

Assessor viewed all property storage areas and found them to be clean and organized. Audit/Inspection records were made immediately available and were in compliance. There was no change in the property custodian or their command officer during accreditation cycle.

Items the agency is not equipped to process are sent to Michigan State Police (MSP) Crime Lab in Lansing, Michigan. This process is documented and items sent to MSP lab are packaged according to MSP evidence packaging standards.

An appropriate policy for transmission and chain of custody is in place. The assessors were shown the procedure first hand from the collection of evidence from the evidence/property locker, to logging the item in the computerized evidence log.

Policies are in place for the proper notification of owners of property received and returned to them or to someone designated by the owner.



### Juvenile Matters

The agency has established policies regarding juvenile status offenses, including runaway cases, unidentified children, and the safe delivery of newborns. There were no incidents where the agency needed to use Amber Alerts or the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN). There are designated areas where juveniles can be placed for temporary holding or detention, with posted notices on their interview rooms that are not appropriate for holding juveniles. Appropriate forms are used for the petitioning of juveniles to court. Parent notification policies and practices for the release of juveniles are present with appropriate documentation including time limits associated with juvenile processing and holding. Reporting requirements were also observed that comply with accreditation standards.

### Special Investigations and Operations

The agency has a special investigations policy. The written directives are in compliance with accreditation standards. The agency is well organized in keeping records of information shared with or received from another agency. The agency has an appropriate deconfliction procedure in place.

Operational supervisors and detectives work together to keep each other informed regarding general investigations as well as special investigations or operations taking place.

The agency does not have a confidential informant policy because they do not utilize confidential informants and the agency received a waiver through MLEAC. The initial On-Site Assessment report indicates the agency's intention to have a policy in the event where it was necessary to develop vital information, however no policy has been created as of the end of this accreditation cycle.

## **Chapter 5 – The Arrestee/Detainee/Prisoner Handling Function:**

### Transporting of Arrestees/Detainees/Prisoners

The Meridian Township Police Department has established policy and procedure in place to include searching vehicles and subjects prior to transport. This process is validated through review of officers daily activity logs and report narratives. Subjects are secured in vehicles with modified rear compartments and seat belts are utilized in compliance with State law.

### Processing of Arrestees/Detainees/Prisoners

All custodial arrests are lodged at the Ingham County Jail. The Meridian Township Police Department has a processing area where arrestees can be given a breathalyzer test prior to being transported to the Ingham County Jail. The processing room is equipped with an emergency button that sounds an alarm indicating there is an emergency in the processing area. It is also their practice to have two officers in the processing room during processing. There is a secure sally port where lock boxes for weapons are installed and available for securing weapons prior to entering the processing room. Access to the processing room is controlled using a cypher lock. Officers have the ability to secure arrestees to the bench in the processing area.

### Holding of Arrestees/Detainees/Prisoners

The agency does not have a holding facility as defined by the standards. The agency rarely, i.e. on average once each year, makes use of their holding facility. This is often time a temporary measure to separate parties for processing prior to interrogation / lodging. The agency will make an effort to refresh their procedure.

It was determined on-site that a mounted camera was operational and the agency updated their written directive to address the use of audio and/or video surveillance system.



### **G. Applied Discretion Compliance Discussion:**

This section provides specific information on those standards found to be in compliance after on-site adjustments were made. During this on-site, the agency had one (1) standard in applied discretion under Chapter 5 - Holding.

#### **Standard 5.3.2h Security Protocols**

**ISSUE:** The agency was not aware of the functioning security camera in the holding cell area; and, therefore did not address its use of audio and/or video surveillance in their written directive.

**AGENCY ACTION:** The agency formalized their procedure by documenting it into policy during the on-site.

### **H. Waivers of Standards:**

This section provides specific information on those standards which qualified for waivers. Waivers are available to agencies when it is impossible to comply with a specific standard. A request to waive standard compliance must be made to the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police Accreditation Program Director in writing, on official agency letterhead, signed by the CEO. The following four (4) standards were granted non-applicable waiver and certified on-site as such:

- *Standard 1..2.1 Fiscal Control:*  
The agency does not have any cash accounts where cash is received or dispersed.
- *Standard 2.1.3 Extra Duty*  
The agency does not authorize or allow extra duty employment.
- *Standard 2.6.1 Reserve / Auxiliary Officers Program:*  
The agency does not operate a reserve/auxiliary officers program.
- *Standard 4.5.3 Confidential Informants:*  
The agency does not use confidential informants.

### **I. Standards Noncompliance Discussion:**

The agency had no standards in noncompliance.

### **J. Future Performance / Review Issues:**

A review of the documented 2019 Final Report (initial) future performance / review issues was completed. The agency has met and successfully addressed tasks/actions identified.

The current on-site assessment revealed future use of the agency holding room should be reviewed upon occurrence to align with agency actions and documentation procedures.



**K. Summary and Recommendation:**

A thorough review of the files for compliance was conducted, as well as observations of compliance; and, after interviews were conducted, it was determined that the agency was in compliance with all of the established accreditation standards, with the exceptions and associated waivers noted. Accreditation is recommended.

*Heather A. Bromley*

Heather Bromley, Team Leader; Date: December 28, 2022

Reviewed and approved to be scheduled for a hearing before the MLEAC.

*Ronald L Wiles*

Program Director Ronald Wiles, Date: December 30, 2022