

**MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP
COMMUNITY RESOURCES COMMISSION
DECEMBER 13, 2023-
ADMIN CONFERENCE ROOM**

PRESENT: Chair Styka, Vice-Chair Robinson, Commissioner Langhals, Commissioner Turimella, Commissioner Webster

ABSENT: Commissioner Maingu

STAFF: Human Services Specialist Love

BOARD LIASON: Trustee Wilson

PUBLIC:

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

A: Chair Styka called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Robinson moves to approve the November 8th, 2023, minutes as written. Seconded by Commissioner Langhals. Motion Carried 5-0.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A: Thanksgiving/Holiday Food Baskets

- Today, Wednesday, December 13th at 10:00, Commissioner Webster and Specialist Love met workers from Department of Public Works at Grange Acres and distributed 92 Holiday food baskets. The food was purchased by the Rotary Club of Haslett-Okemos. The event went well with no negatives of which we are aware.
- Marsh point deliveries of food baskets and Meijer food only gift cards will be Sunday, December 17th at noon. ACTION group from OHS is helping with this.

B: 2024 Commission Appointment update

- Supervisor Jackson decided to hold off on new board appointments until January 2024. At that time, she will ask Lisa Whiting-Dobson to serve on the CRC board.

C: Fundraisers

- Would like to start pulling together the baby bottle fundraiser.
- We would have the fundraiser around Valentines Day.
- Perhaps have them assembled at the next meeting.
- We have been steadily receiving donations throughout the month.
 - o Specialist Love sends thank you notes to those who have donated.
 - o Board Liaison Wilson will send Specialist Love some standard language that can be used in the thank you notes.

D: Zoom Meetings

- After further discussion we cannot hold zoom meetings in the event that the board cannot meet in person.
 - o The Open Meetings Act requires in-person attendance. The only time Zoom would be an option is if a board or commission members request, and is approved for, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) medical accommodations.
- Since we only have to meet ten times a year, we could schedule all 12 meetings so we have the option to cancel if we have a weather event. In the event of bad weather, if the Township offices are closed on a date of a scheduled meeting, we will cancel that meeting date.

E: Year End Letter/Thank you to donors

- In January we will send out a letter to our donors to tell the story of Meridian Cares and thank them for their donations.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A: 2024 Marketing dates Resolution.

- Clerk Gutherie gave Specialist Love a template for 2024 meeting dates.
- We need to select our meeting dates for 2024 so they can be advertised.
- Regular meetings will take place at 6:00 P.M. in the Municipal Conference room on January 10, February 21, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13, and December 11th.
- If the Township offices are closed due to weather on the date of a Community Relations Commission meeting, the commission will not meet.

The motion to approve the Community Resource Commission Meeting Dates for 2024 was approved.

Motion Carried 5-0.

- In January 2024 the Community Relations Commission will vote on a Chair for the Commission. This is a one-year team and must be voted on each year.
- The Township board has approved Commissioner Langhals for an additional 2-year term.

B: Marketing Analysis by Communication Department

- Marketing & Public Relations Specialist Rachael Stohlin put together Marketing options for the Commission to take into consideration.
 - The Communications Department highly recommended having a Meridian Cares E-Newsletter or Informal Email list.
 - Meridian Cares would grow this list organically. This email would primarily be for donors of Meridian Cares.
 - We could use the *Meridian Happenings Newsletter* to grow our specific Meridian Cares newsletter list. We can be added to *Meridian Happenings* in slower news months and encourage people to connect with Meridian Cares and point residents towards ways to learn more.
 - Specialist Love would be responsible for maintaining additional newsletters, Facebook pages etc.
 - The Communication Director recommended posting off our personal accounts to the Okemos/Williamston/Haslett Facebook groups. This is a fantastic way to spread the word.
 - We can use a Meridian Cares specific Facebook page to serve as a landing spot for information. This could be information on how to donate as well as information for residents in need of assistance.
 - Specialist Love would budget time weekly to keep posts active.
 - The Community Relations Commission with a recommendation of the communication department decided against starting a Facebook “group”.
 - The CRC would like to see us “tell a story” about what Meridian Cares does through these avenues of communications.
 - As an action step, Specialist Love will pursue opening the Facebook page again and begin to create content. We can then start collecting emails for our Meridian Cares e-newsletter. Specialist Love will connect with the Communication department and see what months are better to share Cares content.

C: Outreach Public Relations

- Commissioner Langhals shared that a friend of hers was trying to find information on how someone could seek assistance through Meridian

Cares. Her friend googled to find information and really struggled to find accurate information on how to apply.

- We do a lot of communications about donating but finding how to get help is hard to find.
 - o 2-1-1 was shown as a path to apply.
 - o Google led her friend to our website, however, the content on the Meridian Township Meridian Cares page was hard to find.
 - o We seem to be missing getting information out to the people who need assistance.
 - o The Meridian Cares page on the Meridian Township website is especially hard to navigate on a mobile device.
- Specialist Love will speak to the Communication department about ways we can improve the Cares page within the Township website.
 - o The #1 objective will be to get “find help” information at the top of the page.
 - o Specialist Love will also work with Communications to keep our page more accurate and up to date.

6. HUMAN SERVICES REPORT

A: Emergency Funds used in November 2023 were 4,463.93.

B: Specialist Love will be going to the Okemos Senior Center once a month to help residents sign up for SNAP benefits.

C: Emergency Funds used so far in 2023 is \$38,679.59 with a budget of \$50,000.

D: We will most likely land spending around 42,000 in 2023 on emergency needs.

E: PayPal balance is \$1976.28

F: We may have to do a budget amendment in 2023 to purchase more redi-ride passes.

7. BOARD LIASON REPORT- Board Liaison Wilson

The Senior/Community center continues to progress. A firm has been hired to help define the mission, funding sources, and amenities. A meeting took place at the senior center for greater clarity and understanding among the seniors and staff.

We have a new Director of Parks and Recreation, Courney Wisinski.

We now have an open board seat.

8. OPEN FORUM

9. ADJOURNEMENT

Chair Styka adjourned the meeting at 7:04 P.M. with no opposition.