



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
Communications Commission Regular Meeting **DRAFT** minutes
Wednesday, June 26, 2024 | 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Chair, Leslie Charlies; Commissioner, Mike Nevells; Alternate Commissioner, Lisa Whiting-Dobson
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager; Rachael Stohlin, Marketing and Public Relations Specialist
TOWNSHIP: Clerk Deborah Guthrie
COUNSEL: None
COMCAST/AT&T: None

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Charles called the meeting to order at **6:07 pm**.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Alternate Commissioner Nevells moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**.
Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Alternate Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT

Manager Diehl went over the 1st and 2nd quarter reports due to the March 27, 2024 regular meeting being cancelled.

1st Quarter Report: CAMTV server failed due to its age, new channel server equipment purchased; Prime Meridian Magazine sent to residents; Good Morning, Meridian still being filmed; planning for the 50th anniversary of the Friends of Historic Meridian and the Meridian Township Farmers' Market; help promote various Township events; Celebrate Meridian planning begins.

2nd Quarter Report: New channel equipment was installed, staff is still training; informed the Commission of personnel changes with the Township Manager and Township Board; Able Eyes filmed virtual tours at the Municipal Building, Service Center, and Central Fire Station; conducted candidate interviews as part of HOMTV's Your Choice 2024 Primary Election coverage; new Farmers' Market logo was created as part of the 50th anniversary; event promotions for the spring/summer.

Clerk Deborah Guthrie asked Manager Diehl if candidate debates were being filmed. Manager Diehl said that she and Interim Manager Schmitt discussed it but decided against it due to time constraints and staffing limitations. Clerk Guthrie stated that programming decisions are made by the Communications Commission.

7. **COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Communications Chair: Chair Charles mentioned her interest in new member recruitment and the types of qualities the Commission would be looking for in new members. Commissioner Whiting-Dobson stated that Michigan State University was open to passing along information about the Communications Commission openings, but they would like a flyer to hand out and send people. Alternate Commissioner Nevells stated his interest in moving from alternate member to full-time member.

Township Board Liaison: Clerk Guthrie stated that one of the budget items the Township Board is discussing is reinstating the position of Communications Director. Chair Charles stated emergency communications is also an important piece to her.

Commissioners Report: None.

8. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. DAS and Small Cell Policy

A Meridian Township resident had concerns about Meridian Township's DAS and Small Cell Policy and met with Township staff in 2023 to discuss the matter. Manager Diehl presented the topic to the Communications Commission and recommended that the Commission move to have the policy looked at by Township attorneys and staff.

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson moved **TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD TO HAVE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEYS AND STAFF REVIEW AND UPDATE THE WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS ORDINANCES FOR THE TOWNSHIP.** Seconded by Alternate Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

B. General Fund Allocation for Communications Commission Grants

In 2023, a resident came before the Commission to discuss an issue with Comcast. The resident lives in an area where Comcast fiber has not been installed, so they would have to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket for service to be connected. Clerk Guthrie informed the Commission that they could request the Township Board to allocate money from the General Fund to be awarded as grants for residents who are without internet access.

Alternate Commissioner Nevells **MOVED TO REQUEST THAT THE TOWNSHIP BOARD ALLOCATES \$30,000 FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE COMMUNICATIONS**

COMMISSION IN ORDER TO ADMINISTER GRANTS TO RESIDENTS WHERE INTERNET SERVICE DOES NOT EXIST OR FOR HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE ECONOMICALLY CHALLENGED. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

None.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Compliments/Complaints

None.

A. Correspondences

None.

11. REPORTS

A. Video Service Provider(s)

None.

B. Programming

Program totals and video on-demand analytics were shared in the packet. Manager Diehl stated that she would like to see a live stream of the Summer Concert Series at some point.

C. Website & Social Media

Marketing and Public Relations Specialist Rachael Stohlin provided website and social media updates for the 1st and 2nd quarters.

D. Promotions/Publications

Manager Diehl explained how the costs to print and mail out the magazine have increased from 2019 to 2024. Clerk Guthrie requested that the magazine move from 16 pages to 24 pages so that more topics could be included.

E. Finance

Manager Diehl went over the PEG fee amounts received in 2022 and 2023. She explained that there was a 7.2% decrease in PEG fees from 2022 to 2023. This is due to residents getting rid of their cable services. Manager Diehl also explained that PEG fees are supposed to be in their own restricted fund but that they have been going into the general fund since 2020 after the Communications Department was restructured.

F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni

Manager Diehl provided an update on the summer internship program and said that the Communications Department would be recurring at an MSU career fair in September.

G. Broadband

Manager Diehl explained the Merit BEAD Mapping Challenge that occurred from March 25, 2024 through April 23, 2024. Information has been gathered for that challenge, but no information has been released.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Charles moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Alternate Commissioner Nevells.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Charles adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.