



2022

Annual Report

Charter Township of Meridian



Meridian Township

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meridian.mi.us

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To: Board Members

From: Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager

Date: February 6, 2023

Re: 2022 Annual Report

The Meridian Township Management Team is pleased to present you with the Township's 2022 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 2022 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.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions regarding this report. We will continue our efforts in 2023 to work as a team united in spirit for the betterment of our 45,000 Township residents.

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2022

GOALS ACTION PLAN

A. INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Work with Ingham County to facilitate a successful replacement of the Okemos Road Bridge. Place an emphasis on traffic control in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Township staff worked diligently to update residents, businesses and visitors regarding the Ingham County Road Department's Okemos Rd Bridge Project. In total, the Township published 28 chronological updates throughout the year on our website (click on the blue "Construction Updates" button when you visit the link). These updates also went out on all of the Township's social media accounts. That is over 2.5 updates per month over the 11 month construction period.

The Ingham County Road Department published three updates on their website. These updates were not published until October, November and December. In terms of total content and information shared, the Township shared more than 10 times the information the Ingham County Road Department shared with the public.

According to the Ingham County Road Department, the winter storm at the end of December pushed construction schedules back again. The new Okemos Road Bridge is now expected to be completed sometime in late February or early March.

The Ingham County Road Department's original schedule called for construction to begin on February 14, 2022 and to be completed by the end of November. The opening of the new bridge to northbound and southbound traffic has been delayed several times:

1. Construction was delayed at the very beginning of the project from February 14 to March 14 due to AT&T being behind on relocating their utilities on the old southbound bridge. AT&T was required to bore conduit under the Red Cedar River to relocate their utilities.
2. According to the Ingham County Road Department, additional delays were caused by weather (we had a lot of rainfall this summer), concrete shortages, and late changes requested by the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office (a one-month delay was caused by the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office according to the Ingham County Road Department). These delays pushed the opening of the new bridge back to December or January.
3. Most recently, the winter storm at the end of December delayed the pouring of the concrete bridge deck to January, which delayed the opening of the new bridge to February.



Complete year three of the Meridian Township Local Road Improvement Plan. Our PASER rating at the end of 2022 shall be a minimum of 5.50.

Township staff worked diligently to update the community regarding the 2022 local road program construction projects (as well as the remaining 2021 local road projects). Prior to construction, we sent mailers to all of the property owners on the roads that were under construction. These two-page letters detail the construction process, how to contact the Township, how to contact the inspectors on site, the construction schedule, as well as other information.

These letters also direct residents to visit our website at the following link for real-time updates on the local road program construction. In total, the Township published 37 chronological updates throughout the year on our website (click on the blue “Construction Updates” button when you visit the link). We published 5 updates per month and 1.25 updates per week on average over the 7.5 month construction period. These updates also went out on all of the Township’s social media accounts.

Our 2022 milling road projects (i.e. reconstruction) are nearly complete. Here is the remaining construction schedule for 2022 local road program projects, which will be completed in May to July of 2023:

1. Wellington Estates: This neighborhood includes 1.03 miles of local roads and was added to the 2022 local road program contract, using about half of the \$1.3 million the Board initially appropriated. The remaining half of ARP funding was used to fulfill the original 2022 local road program.
2. The Wardcliff Neighborhood: These road projects were postponed until spring of 2023 to allow the Ingham County Drain Commissioner’s Office more time to finalize their engineering plans for drain maintenance work to alleviate flooding homeowners are experiencing.
3. Carlton St, Bayshore Dr, and Buckingham Rd: We put these roads out to bid in 2022 and the bids were exceedingly high. We are removing drain-related infrastructure from the engineering plans and putting them back out to bid as part of the 2023 local road program. With the high inflation we are experiencing, we can no longer afford to pay for all of the drain-related infrastructure we were previously including in our road projects.

All of the 2021 and 2022 preventative maintenance projects were completed in 2022.



Work jointly with the Michigan Department of Transportation to minimize the impacts of the Okemos Road/Grand River Avenue Enhancement Project.

Township staff worked diligently to update residents, businesses and visitors regarding MDOT’s Grand River Ave Project. MDOT was very good at communicating with the Township. In total, the Township published 30 chronological updates throughout the year on our website (click on the blue “Construction Updates” button when you visit the link). These updates also went out on all of the Township’s social media accounts. That is four updates per month and one update per week on average over the 7.5 month construction period.

Due to the nature of this project, some of the work had to be scheduled to be completed in 2023. The following information was already shared with the community via the Township’s website and social media accounts. We will start running Facebook and Instagram ads with this information in February or March of 2023:

The 2022 work involved three different areas:

1. Asphalt resurfacing east of the Marsh Road intersection to Oak Pointe Court.
2. Raising Grand River Avenue over 2 feet and updating underground infrastructure at the Okemos Road intersection to alleviate flooding and road closures.
3. Raising Grand River Avenue over 2 feet and updating underground infrastructure near Nakoma/Playmakers to alleviate flooding and road closures.

The following work will be completed in 2023:

The portions of Grand River Avenue from Marsh Road to the CN railroad bridge that were not raised this year will be resurfaced beginning in May of 2023. Resurfacing work goes much quicker and we anticipate that this work will occur in May and June with the project being completed by July.

This resurfacing work had to be scheduled for the following year as a lot of fill materials and underground infrastructure had to be brought in to raise these two sections of Grand River Avenue in 2022. If these other portions of Grand River Avenue had been resurfaced in 2022, the asphalt would have been heavily damaged by all of the construction equipment and materials being brought in to raise these two sections of Grand River Avenue.

The Township successfully completed our water main work in conjunction with the Grand River Ave construction project at the end of March.



Determine the financial feasibility of implementing of a Railroad Quiet Zone in the northern portion of the Township.

In 2017, implementation of Railroad Quiet Zones (RRQZ) throughout Meridian Township was formally included in the Board's annual goals. This idea originated from the Meridian Transportation Commission. Work led by the Township in prior years determined that it was not financially viable to establish a RRQZ on the CSX railroad line because there is no Positive Train Control (PTC) on this railroad line. PTC is a technology capable of automatically controlling train speeds and movements, should a train operator fail to take appropriate action in the prevailing conditions. This technology is required for a RRQZ. Federal law required PTC to be installed on all Amtrak railroad lines by the end of 2021. Installation of PTC was completed last year on the CN railroad line in accordance with federal law. The CSX railroad line is not an Amtrak line, which is why PTC is not expected to be installed. This means that the CSX railroad line is not viable as a quiet zone as the cost to install PTC is far more than the Township could afford. Our estimate in 2019 was \$2.05 million to \$2.25 million for the PTC and constant warning time circuitry alone. This would cost \$3-\$4 million today.

PTC was installed on the CN railroad line in 2021 in accordance with federal policy. Based on all of our prior research, earlier this year, we contracted with OHM to implement a railroad quiet zone (RRQZ) on the CN railroad line.

Through this process, we learned from CN that the constant warning time circuitry (CWT) was not installed on the CN railroad line at the Okemos Rd, Carlton St and Green Rd crossings as part of the PTC installations. Our work up to this point led us to believe that CWT was required to be installed as part of the PTC installations. There are actually five different types of circuitry that can be installed as part of the PTC installation and only one of the four crossings had CWT installed.

This circuitry is required in order to implement the RRQZ and there is no indication that CN will be required to install CWT at these three crossing anytime in the immediate future.

We estimate that it will cost \$600,000-\$750,000 for this circuitry to be installed at the three crossings (\$200,000-\$250,000 per crossing).

The Board must now decide if, and how, it would like to fund implementation of a railroad quiet zone.



Continue to work with Ingham County officials to determine the most effective process to enhance the community's Broadband.

Now, more than ever, broadband internet is essential to those who work, reside and play in Ingham County. The County has partnered with Merit Network to create a survey that will identify those residents and businesses that do not have high-speed internet or internet that is not reliable. A member from each household in Ingham County should complete this survey, whether they pay for internet access at their property or not. The information resident's provide will only be used to explore broadband access options and will not be sold.

Resident responses are very important to the future of connectivity in Ingham County. Understanding which households are connected to the internet at broadband speeds (25/3 mbps) is the critical first step towards addressing needs throughout the community. The Ingham County Board of Commissioners have committed a portion of the County's American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to this survey so these gaps in internet service can be discovered and resolved.

Township officials support the work of the Ingham County Broadband Task Force and the efforts of conducting this survey. Residents are strongly encouraged to participate, and the deadline had been extended to October 1, 2022. We are awaiting the results from the County.



B. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Continue to work with Michigan State University, and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, to foster a workplace that adheres to the highest standards of diversity, equity and inclusion.

We remain committed to our mission of promoting and supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce through training, evaluation, and action. In 2022, our efforts were both internal and external. We applied DEI internally through Township trainings and operations, and including such actions as our implementation of the ADA accommodation process for the Open Meetings Act, our continued police participation in the pilot program for social workers on demand (electronically via tablet) to more effectively respond to members of the community who may benefit from mental health worker assistance, and we also welcomed an outside trainer who delivered unconscious bias training for police and fire employees.

Update the Township's 2015 Personnel Handbook with an emphasis on building equity for all.

We updated the Personnel Policy Handbook in 2021 to include the Board's DEI-related, "Non Discrimination and Fair Employment Practices Policy". A more thorough review of the entire document

will be completed in the coming year.

Continue to offer DEI training opportunities across the organization on a regular basis.

For the benefit of our residents and visitors to the Township, we have contracted with the Able Eyes organization to develop a virtual tour of Harris Nature Center. This tour is available on the Able Eyes and Meridian Township websites and provides visitors an opportunity to preview our location prior to visiting. The service is helpful for people with physical disabilities to make sure the site meets their accessibility needs, and also for those with emotional challenges, such as anxiety, to ease the feeling of visiting an area for the first time. Additional locations are planned in the near future. We enjoyed a spectacular Juneteenth celebration spanning multiple days, which included opportunities for residents to learn about and connect with each other while learning about Juneteenth history while participating in local festivities. Staff were provided an all-employee luncheon with special guest speakers at Marketplace on the Green. To align with the Board's approval to provide sanitary hygiene products in its public restrooms, the Township installed sanitary napkin and tampon dispensers in order to make these products accessible to those who happen to need them while visiting our Township parks and buildings. The DEI Task Force carries on its forward momentum and looks forward to further expansion in recognizing and celebrating our vibrant and diverse community.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Continue our efforts to bring vitality to the Village of Okemos with the assistance of the Meridian Redevelopment Fund, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Downtown Development Authority Tax Increment Financing Authority. Continue our efforts to revitalize downtown Haslett with the Pine Village development. Assistance available shall include the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the Meridian Redevelopment Authority.

In 2022, PICA redevelopment maintained a priority for the Economic Development Director. Okemos PICA development focuses on the potential Village of Okemos redevelopment project at the intersection of Hamilton and Okemos Road. There are several hurdles when developing two urban commercial blocks outside of the typical development delays. The Village of Okemos submitted an application in May 2022 for \$5M in gap financing to support the workforce housing that this project will create. In August 2022, awards were announced and the Village of Okemos project was not included in the awarded projects.

Closing out the year, the development presented an amendment to the approved MUPUD from July 2021 to add six ground floor residential units and two parking decks for each block. In addition, the Township Board reviewed and approved the Village of Okemos 19 year Brownfield Plan. A reimbursement for eligible activities up to \$6.9M out of a total \$8.4M created of the available capture. 73% if the plan is supported by State tax capture, and an approval from the MSF Board is necessary to have all of the Brownfield dollars. The remaining approvals fall to the burial of the HVD, construction and design of the street improvements, construction and design of the storm water retention.

1673 Haslett Road is the development formally we introduced to our community as the "Pine Village" mixed used development. A four story development with three stories of independent living for 55+ residents. The first floor is commercial space reserved for members of the public, local small businesses and space for the residents of the developments. As of November 7th, Redico has approved foundations in the ground, elevator and stair cases, and full approval to commence with construction. The amended Brownfield Plan will take into consideration the addition of 3% or 5% interest back to the developer as an incentive for continuing with the project. Leasing has begun for both commercial and residential units, we anticipate the project opening in spring of 2024.

1655 & 1621 Haslett Road is under discussion with SP Holding LLC of Holland MI, began to redevelop the property in May 2021. The Planning and Economic Development Departments goals focused on creating a housing development that encourages mixed commercial establishments, updated

interurban trail and access to parking. In order to complete this redevelopment, the developer requested the use of a Commercial Rehabilitation exemption, for 10 years layered with an 11 year Brownfield Plan. The 10 year exemption on the value of the buildings is a performance based incentive. As the developer builds, the exemption on the taxes will allow them the necessary cash flow to complete the seven phase development. The Brownfield Plan at 11 years will support the \$2.4M needed to remove the contaminated soils on the property. At a project valued at \$65M, a total of about \$8.4M in tax incentives is a small cost to the advanced redevelopment outcome. Ownership is a major element



to gaining the approvals from the State Tax Commission and MEDC for the two incentives. As the developer is currently working through closure of the property, by the first quarter of 2023 action will be taken to finalize both incentives.

Work cooperatively with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the Meridian Township Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to recertify our Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) status.

Meridian Township will finish year one of a two year recertification process. There are several remaining steps to achieve an active status for the recertification of RRC. A reduction of some of the redundant residential zoning, adoption of the 2023 Master Plan, 2023 Economic Development strategy, 2023 Budget (updated), CIP (soon to be updated), updated public participation policy should be approved within first quarter 2023. In October, MEDC team specialists reached out to inform our teams of the massive update to the review and approval process within MEDC. It will not be a requirement for communities to have the active status for RRC in order to be eligible for some incentives provided by the State. There will be some incentives that MEDC may require an active or high level for Mainstreet/RRC Communities. Specifically, for the Community Revitalization and Placemaking Grant (CRP), RRC will not be a requirement anymore. For other programs, such as the Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP) Grants, the active RRC status was a point indicator. The total number of points helped MEDC weigh which projects should be awarded their grant requests. MEDC is in talks of additional grant funding from RAP and our status current in the RRC with MEDC is active. Should we not meet the additional updates as required, we may be moved into an inactive status by January 1, 2024. As of December 2022, these are the remaining items to gain active status:

1. Access to Information- providing a guide to developers that explains policies, procedures and steps to obtain approvals.
2. Project Tracking – providing documentation of the community’s project tracking system from application to approval
3. Continued Improvement- solicit feedback and regular review of the development process
4. Boards and Commissions- create a recruitment process, provide a statement of ethics, provide an orientation for appointed members, adopt community bylaws for commissions, prepare annual reports, provide training and complete at least one joint commission meeting a year
5. Make significant updates to our zoning ordinances to meet modern development standards
6. Update the Township’s Marketing/Branding and Communication Strategy

To meet compliance by November 2023, the Community Planning, Communications, Economic Development, Public Works, and Township Board will have to administratively make these updates starting January 1, 2023. There are several other Township departments that may have to take time to review and compile information. A suggestion would be to gather the Township Board's opinion on our steps further within RRC. The goals are achievable, however; will take much discussion, especially related to housing types, mixed use by right and other zoning requirements we do not currently allow.

Work in partnership with CBL Properties to forge a plan to accommodate a Meridian Mall Commercial Planned Unit Development.

CBL is actively seeking tenants for available anchor space. Mall redevelopment is leaning toward centralized business commercial areas (ex: Lakeside, CBL other malls). Mixture of all activities to support massive commercial acres. This year CBL needs to parcel off some tenants and succeeded with separating Olive Garden and Chili's. During our tour of the Younkers space they indicated they have interest for a major tenant for that space. There is a need to restructure that parcel, as well, and the deal will be in motion. Drain improvements continue to be discussed as the Ingham County Drain Commission has made mention of the lack of storm water retention on the 60 + impervious acre site. They maintain interest in creating a space for retention for the Meridian Mall site. The location and size have yet to be determined. Our local support should be shown through additional funding for infrastructure improvements. The proposal will be for the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) to have access to a Tax increment Financing Plan to support those improvements. The deal would be a 12 year plan to gain support from the other taxing jurisdictions.

D. COMMUNITY PLANNING

With the support of the Planning Commission, Township Board and residents, formulate a process to update the Township's 2017 Master Plan supporting green infrastructure.

In late August, the Planning Commission officially issued a Notice of Intent to Plan, required under State enabling legislation, to begin the process to update In September, Staff presented the Township Board and Planning Commission with a tentative schedule to move forward and update the Plan. The Planning Commission has held an initial public hearing on the plan and begun receiving input from the public. Although we expect the update may take slightly longer than originally anticipated, due to other obligations arising since the timeline was unveiled, Staff believes that we are well on track to have an updated Master Plan in 2023.

In a cooperative manner with our Parks Commission, and the Department of Natural Resources, develop a 2022-2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides an opportunity to obtain input from the community, as well as, identify trends to assist in determining future capital projects. The update was conducted by in-house staff and included community surveys, opportunities for public input, staff recommendations and a public hearing. Both the Park Commission and Township Board approved the updated plan before it was submitted to the Tri-County Regional Planning Office and to the Grants Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on April 1. This plan is required by the MDNR to qualify for state and federal grant funding.

Develop a policy, criteria and procedure for expanding public art.

Directors Schmitt, Clark and Maisner reviewed art policies from other communities including East Lansing, City of Jackson and the Village of Dimondale; and also met with local artists to begin the conversation. Following our investigation, we came to several conclusions and recommendations:

1. Creation of an "Arts Commission" - Each community created an "Arts Commission" to lead and create the policy and processes utilized to promote and implement a community arts program.

2. Funding: This is a primary consideration by artists that speaks to the community's commitment to the program.
3. Spark Community Interest- A few years ago, the DDA leased individual art sculptures that were placed throughout the downtown Okemos area. This was hugely successful and eventually led to the colorful "community-painted" murals now located at Wonch Park, Hillbrook Park and at the entrance to the Large Dog Park in Central Park South, as well as the colorful murals painted on the front of Central Elementary School in Okemos. This "snowball effect" is a sound strategy to generate interest and engagement of public art in Meridian Township.
4. Grass Roots Effort- A small project such as working with local art teachers to have students paint a fire hydrants near our local schools engages local youth and also provides a "canvas" that can be changed and updated annually. Sometimes the smallest projects can have the greatest impact!

In summary, our recommendations include:

- A. Start small to generate a snowball effect of interest and engagement.
- B. Lease art sculptures for placement throughout the community
- C. Create an Arts Council to develop policy, seek grants and recommend projects to the Township Board.
- D. Authorize a General Fund allocation for public art annually.

Create a structure to broaden our affordable housing opportunities.

Meridian Township is in a position of being a very attractive community to all walks of life, but especially to families with school aged children. This is due in no small measure to the high quality of the Haslett and Okemos school districts. This high demand drives up the cost of housing, which further decreases the relative affordability of housing in the community. At some point, housing in a community becomes unaffordable to those that work there, which in turn creates a labor shortage, as people have to make a determination as to whether or not it makes sense to commute to a job where they don't live.

Affordable housing is often publicly subsidized and is generally more dense development than the surrounding area. The Woodward Way project under construction behind Whole Food is a good example of this, as there are Low Income Tax Credits involved in the project and it is multi-family attached construction, in the middle of a single-family detached neighborhood. Long term, these types of fill in projects are the Township's best bet to increasing affordable housing opportunities. Additionally, Staff is always on the lookout for potential grant opportunities to further this goal. We often do not qualify, given that we are not a low to moderate income community, but there may be future funding rounds where we can stand up an affordable housing program in the Township.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

With the support of the Environmental Commission, develop a site and implementation for the Township's fourth solar project with a goal of 100% solar energy by 2035.

Installation of a solar array on the public safety building carports was complete in November. This brings Meridian Township one step closer to its goal of obtaining 100% of the Township's operational electricity from renewable energy by 2035.

This new system consists of 101 solar panels and is a 41 kilowatt (kW) system, producing approximately 47,000 kilowatts per hour (kWh) per year of renewable solar energy, which offsets about 17% of the electrical consumption. The installation of the new system took approximately 8 days and will be operational any day now, according to Absolute Solar.

The panels have a 25-year power output warranty, but should continue to produce energy even after that time. The amount of energy produced for Meridian Township over the course of its lifetime depends on how many years past that 25-year warranty the panels continue to operate.

Estimated electric bill savings over the 25-year period is approximately \$319,000 and the system will pay for itself in about 11 years. However, that does not factor in the potential utilization of solar tax incentives under the new Inflation Reduction Act. If the Township is able to utilize the incentive, the 11-year payback period will be reduced significantly. More information will be available in 2023 once guidelines for the new bill have been released.

This is the Township’s fourth consecutive year of completing a solar project. We also updated the solar project page on our Township’s website in 2022. The public can now access information about all of our solar arrays by clicking here. Click on the blue “System Details” button, then click on “Production Details” to view the dashboard for each solar array, which show how much energy each array generates on a daily, monthly and annual basis.

Work with the Environmental Commission to create a successful Wetland Campaign and Green Projects Initiative.

The Wetland Campaign and Build Back the Buffer Initiatives developed by the Environmental Commission were also adopted into the Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2022-2026 by the Park Commission.

Emma Campbell, Stewardship Coordinator worked with a local Eagle Scout Candidate to develop and build a wetland buffer in Central Park South adjacent to the pond. This project will serve as a demonstration area with interpretive signage and serve as an educational attraction in the park.

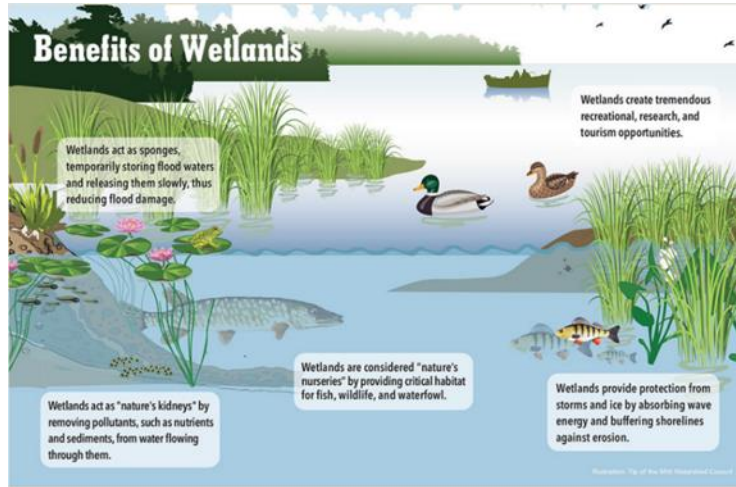
The Parks and Recreation Department hosted a number of educational “Wetland Walks” from February through September at different wetland areas in the Township. Participants learned about wetlands, conservation and township ordinances that protect these areas as part of the Meridian Conservation Corp Program.

Emma Campbell created a 51-page “Native Plant Guide” which includes information on wetland protection as well as garden designs for wetland buffer plantings that is available to the community on the Township’s website.

The second wetland education mailing went out to property owners with wetlands and/or wetland buffers on October 6. The mailing went to 3,794 property owners.

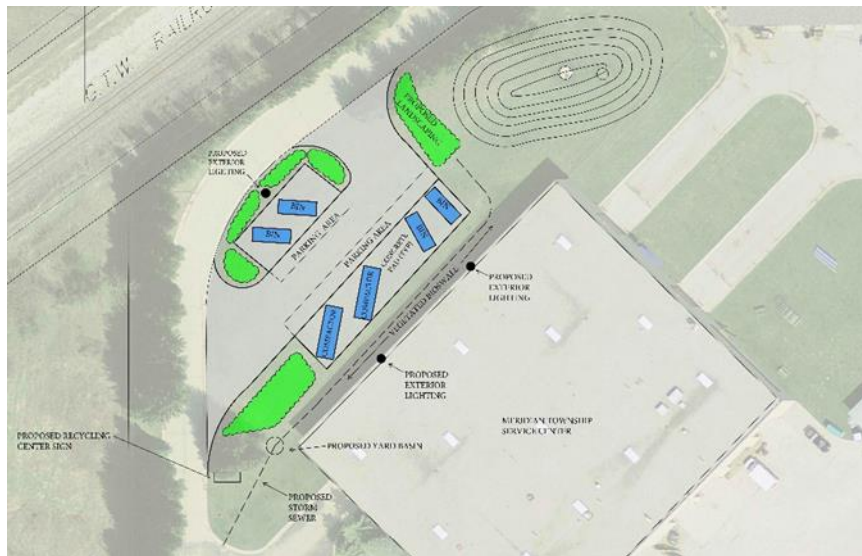
Create consistent enforcement of our wetland ordinance.

Staff continues to investigate any wetland complaint we receive in a timely fashion. In 2022, we had two potential violations that were raised to staff that were investigated. In both cases, no impacts to the wetlands were observed and the property owners were educated about the wetland ordinance, land clearing ordinances, and other related issues. The Township’s wetland consultant is available as necessary and staff utilizes their services regularly.



Continue to place a significant emphasis on community recycling events and improvements to Meridian’s Recycling Center.

Due to an issue with construction costs, we are reapplying for the EGLE grant we were awarded earlier this year to construct a new recycling center behind the Service Center. We anticipate applying for the grant in April of 2023 with construction in 2024 if we are successful in obtaining the grant again. The site plan for the new recycling center is below.



Improving the Existing Recycling Center: We have continued to improve the condition of the service drive to the recycling center on Lake Dr. We recently had the service drive graded with an additional 40 yards of limestone.



2022 Recycling Events: Meridian worked in partnership with Granger, Hammond Farms, My Green Michigan, Delta Dental, Okemos Action, Okemos Earth Club, Meridian Farmers Market, Consumers Energy, recycling companies, and over 200 volunteers to conduct several recycling events in 2022. Recycling included electronics, paint, bicycles, clothing, metal, appliances and Freon reclamation, and more.

The Meridian Green Team also held two rain barrel and compost bin sales, a “Green Fair,” and educational outreach at the Marketplace on the Green, sharing information about household hazardous waste, Meridian Conservation Corp, Meridian Cares, solar energy, wetlands, lake-healthy landscaping, native plants, storm water pollution prevention, and more.

F. FACILITIES, PARKS AND GROUNDS

In cooperation with our Information Technology (IT) consultant, use our budgeted resources to bring substantial enhancements to our township’s IT infrastructure.

In 2022, the Township worked with Brightline IT to complete a renovation plan for the township technology systems. While approximately \$520,000 of the improvements will be completed in 2022, over a 250,000 worth of improvements will not be completed until early 2023. The outstanding items include \$75,000 of workstation replacements, \$79,000 for replacement of the servers related to our data continuity plan, including patch management, intrusion prevention, system backups, and significant investments in cloud services to enhance network security at the end-user and core systems. The technology department will continue to invest significant funds for the training of technology staff and end-users across the organization in 2023.

Construct Phase I and II of the MSU to Lake Lansing Regional Pathway.

Construction of Phase I began in December of 2022 and is anticipated to be completed in July to September of 2023. Construction of Phase II could begin as early as March or April and will be completed by year end 2023.

After many years of hard work to acquire the land, secure the necessary funding, and design the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail, we are very excited to announce that we will be constructing Phases I and II in 2023. Once Phases I and II are completed this year, users will have an easy, safe, and enjoyable option for non-motorized travel between the MSU Campus and Lake Lansing Park South, along approximately five miles of connected pathways and trails.

Phase I is approximately one mile long and starts on the north side of the Hagadorn Road and Shaw St.

intersection and concludes at the Grand River Ave. and Park Lake Road intersection. Phase I includes a pedestrian bridge that will take motorists and bicyclists over the Red Cedar River behind the MSU Community Music School. The trail will then take users along the banks of the Red Cedar River to the north side of the CN Railroad tracks.

The estimated cost of construction for Phase I is \$3.37 million. Meridian Township successfully obtained a \$1.7 million federal TAP grant for Phase I. The remaining portion of the project will be funded by the Ingham County Trails and Parks Millage and the Township Pathway Millage.

Phase II is 1.2 miles long and begins near the Grand River Ave. and Campus Hill Dr. intersection and concludes near the Okemos Road and Gaylord C Smith Ct. intersection. Pedestrians and bicyclists will use the Township’s existing pathway system to get from the Grand River Ave. and Park Lake Road intersection, where Phase I ends, to the Grand River Ave. and Campus Hill Dr. intersection, where Phase II begins.

The estimated cost of construction for Phase II is \$730,000. This phase is funded by the Ingham County Trails and Parks Millage and the Township Pathway Millage.

From the northern end of Phase II on Okemos Rd, users will be able to use the existing 10-foot-wide pathway on the east side of Okemos Road to the inter-urban pathway. The Township widened this half-mile stretch of the Okemos Road pathway for the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail in 2021. Users can then take the existing 1.1-mile inter-urban trail from Okemos Road to Marsh Road.

The Township also announced that it will begin working on the design and engineering of Phase III in 2023. This is the final phase of the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail and will provide a trail route from Marsh Road, just south of Haslett Road, all the way to Green Road in the northeast corner of the Township.

Once all three phases are completed, the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail will provide residents with approximately 6.75 miles of trail system, which will enhance the region’s trail system by connecting to the MSU and Lansing River Trails. We can’t wait to celebrate the opening of Phases I and II with the community.



Demolish house on Okemos Road in preparation of building support facilities for the MSU-Lake Lansing Trail.

The Township received a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to assist in acquiring this parcel at the end of 2021. Demolition of the house and land restoration was completed in April 2022.

Improve capacity and safety by expanding parking at North Meridian Road Park and Central Park South

These paving projects were planned and coordinated in cooperation with the Engineering Department. Based on higher than normal and higher than budgeted costs associated with this project, bidding will occur in December for spring 2023 completion.

To improve water quality at Central Park South pond, install two Floating Natural Purification Islands planted with live vegetation.

The five floating islands were planted utilizing native plants grown from seeds collected in parks and land preserves. These islands were planted utilizing volunteers and placed and anchored with assistance from the Park Maintenance Division staff and Fire Department. This method for filtering pond water was recommended by Park Commissioner Mark Stephens.



G. PUBLIC SAFETY

Continue our commitment to implementing bold recruiting methods to maintain a police force of 41 and firefighter/paramedic of 34.

We are making great progress in our quest to recruit a full bench of 41 police officers and 34 firefighter/paramedics. Currently, we are at 39 police officers and 34 firefighter/paramedics. This is the closest we've been to 100% occupancy in my ten years at Meridian Township. With the changes in compensation, our outstanding reputation and the newly devised recruitment program, we are hitting on all strides.



Purchase a new 2023 Pumper to replace Engine 93 built in 1999

We did receive our new ladder truck on November 1, 2022.

Review and update our accreditation through the Michigan Association of Police Chiefs.

The process is underway. The Department had an initial review and the final review will take place in December.

H. TOWNSHIP FINANCES

Continue our 2017 pledge to voters by investing an additional \$1,500,000 into MERS to help reduce our underfunded pension liability.

On track with 2022 budget to contribute \$5,217,456 to our MERS pension. This contribution is \$1,958,100 beyond our Annual Required Contribution (ARC) of \$3,259,356.

Implement a thorough process for the distribution of the \$4,500,000 American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

The leadership team submitted project proposals to the Township Board for the first half of the ARPA funds. The Board discussed the projects and took action to obligate \$1.3 million to local road projects, \$970,000 to overhaul the Township IT infrastructure, and about \$260,000 for power cots to be used in Township ambulances. At the November 29th Board meeting, the leadership team submitted additional project proposals for the remaining \$2 million of ARPA funds. At the December 13, 2022 Board meeting, the Board appropriated \$60,000 to digitail building and fire plan review, \$93,000 for wind screens at the Marketplace on the Green, \$135,000 to update the Police Department locker rooms, \$700,000 to local road projects, about \$518,000 to research the feasibility of a Senior & Community Center, \$350,000 towards an affordable housing initiative, and \$150,000 for Meridian Historical Village repairs. Any remaining ARPA funds not expended by June 30, 2025 will automatically rollover to fund Meridian Township local roads.

I. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Promote new features and build awareness for added functionality of the newly refreshed Township website. Encourage additional use of the Township's online services.

Monsido, a new accessibility feature, was added to the website. This will allow users to adjust font size, type, and other personalized options. It also shows staff to fix non-compliant areas on the backend.



Strengthen and reinvigorate community support of the Township’s brand through a multitude of platforms: Prime Meridian Magazine, new Township signage, digital channels and additional print materials.

Prime Meridian Magazine was released in April and has gone down to being released once a year. Staff ordered samples of the new signs that will be placed throughout the buildings and will decide what style to use once those are delivered.

2022 Welcoming & Wayfinding Sign Project: We awarded the contract for the project to Johnson Sign Co. on September 28. The contract price came out to \$431,175. This will include 18 signs throughout the Municipal Complex and across Meridian Township.

We are working on securing the two final easements for the Township Welcome Signs, one on Grand River at the west entrance to the Township and one on Grand River at the east entrance to the Township. Once these two easements are secured, the last approval needed will be electrical permits for any signs that will be illuminated.

Installation is scheduled to begin the week of January 6, 2023, with an estimated completion date of March 18, 2023. The signs with planters will be completed a little later, with an estimated completion date of April 15, 2023, which will depend on weather and ground conditions.



Branding and Preventative Maintenance of the North Water Tower: The preventative maintenance of the north water tower was completed earlier this year. Our new Township brand is prominently displayed on the north water tower facing eastbound and westbound traffic on Saginaw Hwy (M-78).



Enhance the Town Hall Room audio and visual equipment to improve meeting room capabilities and better serve multimedia usage.

Installation of new monitors and equipment is set to begin mid-November 2022. Additional wiring and synchronization equipment will be installed later in December or early 2023.

Upon completion, the dais and staff table will be equipped with 22-inch monitors for board and commission members to use during public meetings. We will also be installing four televisions mounted overhead in the center of the Town Hall Room. There will also be a television installed on the wall on each side of the dais.

Foster an effective education plan regarding the Community Services Millage.

After a successful effort to educate voters, this millage passed with 73% voter approval and will be in effect through 2031. This millage supports Recreation, Meridian Senior Center, and Human Services programs.

In 2002, Meridian Township voters approved a .1 mill Community Services millage. The original ballot proposal sought to provide funding for recreation, senior center and human services. The 10-year millage expired in 2012. In 2012, the Township Board chose to seek an increase from .1 to .15 mill, with the additional .05 mill levy dedicated to supporting programming for senior citizens. Again, the voters supported the ballot proposal.

Twenty years have passed since the original millage was approved by voters. On December 31, 2021, the current levy expired and had to be reauthorized for this year, December 2022.

Manager Walsh asked our team members most affected by the millage (Parks & Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner, Human Services Coordinator Darla Jackson & Senior Center Director Cherie Wisdom) to meet and determine the current funding vs. future needs. The three leaders agreed to recommend a renewal.

During the February 15, 2022 meeting, the Board decided to put the Community Services millage up for renewal on the August 2, 2022 ballot.

J. RETENTION, RECRUITMENT AND WELL-BEING

Focus on implementing the 2022 Township Retention and Recruitment Program.

We have demonstrated our desire to recruit, retain, and preserve the well-being of our exceptional staff through improved wages, returning to in-person celebratory events for staff and providing regular recognition of jobs well done and providing excellent, often long-term, service to the Township. These elements are particularly important as we continue to navigate the hopeful settling down of the pandemic, whose protocols still remain in place under emergency order until January 2023. The Township put additional pay increases into place, above what was already stated in our collective bargaining agreements, made wage improvements in all four of the upcoming contracts negotiated this year, and offered a one-time lump sum payment in June to help all employees with the challenging impacts of our economy. We worked diligently to ensure fairness and equity in the implementation of these endeavors, in order to serve the numerous roles and responsibilities of our staff.

Develop creative ways to focus on and improve the team's well-being.

In an effort to achieve balance in our work experience, we have offered flexible work hours through recruitment and retention programs, keeping in mind the importance of taking time to rest and recharge.

In an effort to foster teamwork, continue to offer programs and events such as team picnics, holiday parties and Lugnuts games.

We actively promote connection and set the stage as often as possible for staff to get to know and celebrate our fellow workers by offering annual events, such as our Lugnuts sporting events, annual holiday party, providing Township gear that can be worn to work, and the Archie Virtue Award. The Award recognizes exemplary employees who continue to go above and beyond in their Township work. In addition this year, we enjoyed the Fun Friday program a trivia lunch hour program intended to step away from the office for an hour of comradery and goodwill. We look forward to continuing with these positive and inclusive programs into 2023 and beyond.

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.

2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

2021 Township Audit

The annual audit was completed by Yeo & Yeo CPA's & Business Consultants. The audit was given a clean review. With the 2021 audit, we implemented GASB Statement No. 98, *The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report*. A single audit was not required for the 2021 fiscal year because the Township did not expend Federal grant funds in excess of \$750,000.

The Township submitted its 2020 audited financial reports to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 2020 audit.

2023 Budget

The 2023 budget was presented to the Township Board on September 6, 2022 and approved at the September 20th Board meeting. The budget is showing a use of \$1.6 million in use of the General Fund, but the Township will still have a strong expected fund balance of \$12.3 million.

Federal Grants

In June of 2022, we received the second half of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The second half of the ARPA payment was \$2,269,680. The total amount of ARPA funds received was about \$4.5 million.

TEAM MEMBERS

Amanda Garber, Director
Bernie Blonde, Accountant
Christina Weber, Bookkeeper
Korissa Freier, Bookkeeper
Kimberly Graham, Account Payable Clerk

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 2022 under the leadership of the Township Manager's office:

- Coordinated the 2023 Goals and Objectives process.
- Continued to seek opportunities to reduce overall operating costs.
- Development and oversight of the Township's 2023 Budget.
- Developed the Communication Plan for the Grand River Avenue construction project and the replacement of the Okemos Road Bridge.
- We were fortunate to select Amanda Garber as our new Finance Director. Amanda is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).
- We were able to bring Melissa Massie to a new role on our team as Director of Project Management and Operations.
- With the departure of Derek Perry, Deputy Township Manager, we were able to hire former Trustee Dan Opsomeer as the Township's Deputy Township Manager.
- Swore in two new Trustees Marna Wilson, Scott Hendrickson and a new Township Supervisor, Patricia Herring Jackson.
- Accepted \$4.4 million 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 American House-Meridian groundbreaking.
- Passed the 2022 Community Services Millage.
- Installed our fourth Solar Array.
- Reconstruction and resurfacing of nine miles of local roads and eight miles of preventative maintenance.
- Received new Fire Ladder Truck.
- Installed 11th Outdoor Warning Siren.

TEAM MEMBERS

Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager
Dan Opsommer, 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.

2022 TOP TEN TAXPAYERS

2022 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	\$998,921	\$32,385,100	\$33,384,021
2	C150 2929 HANNAH LOFTS, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$22,059,405	\$321,700	\$22,381,105
3	EAST LANSING I, LLC	RETAIL	\$15,399,404	\$0	\$15,399,404
4	MERIDIAN MALL, LP	APARTMENTS	\$15,207,600	\$0	\$15,207,600
5	EAST LANSING ATHLETIC CLUB, INC.	HEALTH CLUB	\$9,998,981	\$811,200	\$10,810,181
6	TEG CENTRAL, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$10,634,281	\$0	\$10,634,281
7	BRANDYWINE CREEK II, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$9,318,878	\$0	\$9,318,878
8	TEG CLUB MERIDIAN, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$8,867,655	\$0	\$8,867,655
9	ACC OP, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$8,707,289	\$0	\$8,707,289
10	OKEMOS POINTE I, LLC	APARTMENTS	\$8,203,485	\$0	\$8,203,485

2022 VALUE SUMMARY

PROPERTY CLASS	PARCEL COUNT	SEV	TV
Commercial	671	519,160,650	433,498,692
Industrial	42	5,165,000	3,881,034
Residential	13,247	1,760,950,228	1,498,552,855
Personal	1,529	70,571,000	70,571,000
Exempt	367	0	0
TOTALS:	15,856	2,355,846,878	2,006,503,581

2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Defend Tax Appeals with Vigor

At the end of 2022, there were three parcels under appeal in the Entire Tribunal Division of the Michigan Tax Tribunal. Four appeals were resolved during 2022. The taxable value in contention for pending 2022 appeals is just 0.06 of a 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

The annual re-inspection program resumed for 2022. Two summer interns were hired to support the Assessing Department in meeting inspection requirements. Interns updated record cards, photos and confirmed building measurements in Hillbrook, Oak Grove and Ottawa Hills subdivisions. This is in addition to the inspections completed by full-time assessing staff.

2022 Board of Review Members

Chris Silker (alternate)	Michael Nussdorfer
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 2022 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

Through the collaborative efforts with Executive Administrative Assistant Michelle Prinz, the Townships Boards and Commissions list is updated and maintained for date appointed/elected to office, sworn-in, ethics statement signed, and term of service. We also collaborate with Township Supervisor Pat Jackson in processing public service applications, and Supervisor appointment recommendations.

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 2022, fifteen (15) of eighteen (18) codes were sent to Municipal Code for codification. Through the collaborative efforts of the Community Planning and Development and Clerk's Office staff, a shared ordinance numbering system implemented in 2022 continued to be maintained and accurately recorded in a timely fashion. 2022 saw triple the number of codifications from the previous year.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION AND 2022 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 2022 the Clerk's office election voting records included:

- Maintained (by hand) Voter Cards (Master Cards) and Voter Identification Cards for 33,284 registered voters. The scanned voter records and Master Cards are updated on a daily basis

- 3,942 new voters for 2022
- Updated 13,282 manual voter records, based on 15,694 Inbox Data Base Changes
- Updated 2,500 voter Master Card records which were digitally scanned and stored, freeing up valuable space and allowing faster voter data retrieval
- Current reviewing, purging and updating Master Card File for all registered voters 33,284 based on QVF Data Base

Meridian Township held two elections August Primary and November General in 2022.

August 2, 2022 – 9,376 Absent Voter Ballots Issued
 8,237 Absent Voter Ballots Returned
 24 Overseas Civilian and Military Ballots Issued
 0 Accessible Ballots Issued
 44 Absent Voter Ballots Issued Day Before and on Election Day

November 8, 2022 – 13, 667 Absent Voter Ballots Issued
 13, 122 Absent Voter Ballots Returned
 114 Overseas Civilian and Military Ballots Issued
 1 Accessible Ballots Issued
 638 Absent Voter Ballots Issued Election Weekend & Election Day

- For 2022 - 2,464 residents applied to be sent an Absent Voter Application not all added to permeant voter list for 2022 Elections
- 2022 Total Absent Voters on Automatic Ballot Application List 17,426
- 221 New Voters Registered 14 Days Prior to the August Primary Election
- 481 New Voters Registered 14 Days Prior to the November General Election

Due to State-Wide Redistricting, County Reapportionment, and Local Election Commission (EC) Precinct Boundary and Polling location changes, all registered voters in Meridian Township received a new voter identification card indicating any changes. To eliminate split precincts caused by redistricting and reapportionment, the EC recommended precinct boundary line changes were approved by the Township Board.

Precinct 17 was split into two precincts to come into compliance with state law on the limit of only up to 2,999 active registered voters allowed in each precinct.

In an effort to address school safety concerns and the layout of the polling locations, staff made the recommendation to abolish polling locations within school buildings. The EC, and the Township Board fully supported and approved abolishing those locations to address school safety concerns.

PETITION SIGNATURE VALIDATION PROCESS

On Friday, July 29, 2022 at 11:30 am, 275 partial petition sheets were filed with the Meridian Township Clerk’s Office containing 1,988 signatures to put a ballot question on the November 8, 2022 election. A supplemental filing was received on Tuesday, August 2, 2022. 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, our office submitted the petition to the Township Attorney’s for review and recommendation. Counsel ruled the petition invalid and subsequently the petitioner requested the petition to be withdrawn.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOIA)

The Clerk's Office responded to 120 Freedom of Information requests filed with the Clerk's office during 2022 and 120 were completed. This number was almost double the number of FOIA's received in 2021.

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. In 2022, the Clerk's Office submitted 141 legal notices for publication for a total cost of \$11,014.54. In addition, the Clerk's Office began publishing legal notices in the City Pulse in addition to the LSJ in an effort to increase transparency and encourage public participation at township meetings and public hearings.

NOTARY SERVICES AND OATHS OF OFFICES

During 2022, the Clerk's office performed 110 notarial services, and 102 oaths of office for public service and police and fire appointments. Most 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 free notary services from our office. The oath of office must be taken whenever an official is originally elected or appointed and 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 2022, there were 46 burials, 52 lot sales, 1 Disinterment. 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 2022, the Clerk's Office stored 28 sets of Township Board meeting packets, minutes and agendas along with 107 resolutions, Certificates of Supervisor and Quit Claim Deeds. Staff also retained and updated 16 Ordinances passed by the Township Board which were sent to EZ Code who creates the supplements to our Code of Ordinances.

2022 ELECTION COMMISSION

Clerk Deborah Guthrie
Trustee Kathy Ann Sundland
Trustee Courtney Wisinski

TEAM MEMBERS

Deborah Guthrie, Township Clerk
Robin Faust, Assistant to the Clerk/Deputy Clerk (Jan-Aug)
Zack Lemaster, Administrative Assistant II (Jan-Aug)
Zack Lemaster, Assistant to the Clerk/Deputy Clerk (Aug)
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.

2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Enhance the Town Hall Room audio and visual equipment to improve meeting room capabilities and better serve future multimedia usage.

Smart Offices and Smart Homes was the company chosen to complete the Town Hall Room Upgrade Project. A partial installation of the equipment was completed in November 2022. The Town Hall Room now has seven new television monitors, 12 new microphones, 10 individual monitors at each dais seat, a new lectern, a new audio/video mounted rack, and updated audio wiring. The final video distribution control panel is expected to arrive in the second quarter of 2023, if not sooner. Once that piece is delivered, Smart Offices will need approximately two more days of work to complete the full installation. Even though the final piece is missing, the room is fully operational and held its first Township Board meeting on December 6.

Promote and build awareness for added functionality of the newly refreshed Township website. Encourage additional use of the Township's online services. Continue to add new features to the website including reservations, payments and a Business Directory.

A new accessibility feature was added to the Meridian Township website in September 2022. Monsido is a company that specializes in providing website accessibility services to web users, as well as, the webmaster working on the back end of the website. Monsido runs a daily scan of the Meridian Township website and lists issues that are not compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 levels. Manager Diehl can then go in and resolve those issues. This leads to an increased accessibility level. When a user visits the Meridian Township website, they will see a small, purple icon in the bottom left-hand corner of every page. Selecting the icon allows the user to change font style, font size, text spacing, cursor size, contrast and more. Right now, the website is at 68% accessibility compliance, when the industry standard is 88%.

Work with the Human Resources Department to create a web portal for employee information and to house a library of staff training videos to utilize for onboarding of new employees and internal communications.

An internal web portal was not created in 2022, but Communications Staff researched different companies who utilize this feature. Granicus, the web provider for Meridian Township, offers a software called OpenCities Intranets. This software, once integrated with the current website, will offer streamlined internal communications, easy access to vital information and secure content delivery to specific employee groups.

Branding Strategy and Implementation Plan

External – Strengthen and reinvigorate community support of the Township’s brand through a multitude of platforms: Prime Meridian Magazine, new Township signage, digital channels and additional print materials. Plan a multi-year phased approach for rolling out brand campaigns throughout the community.

Prime Meridian Magazine was released in April 2022 and has gone down to being released once a year. The Communications Department has been working with Deputy Manager Opsommer and Director Massie on the new internal sign project. Multiple companies have been contacted, with mock-ups and sign samples being sent to Staff for evaluation. The project is on-going and no final decisions on the company or design have been made.

Internal – Audit internal documents, forms and brochures for Township brand standards and create a timeline to re-brand documents, as needed. Provide additional templates and staff training to create internal brand ambassadors.

Auditing of internal documents, forms and brochures was completed in summer 2022. Agenda templates, cover pages, footers, envelopes, forms, letterheads, memos, notices, press releases and resolution documents have all been updated with the correct Township Brand Standards and are available for Staff use.

Launch a marketing and communications ticket system to assist with the planning of marketing needs across departments. This is the next step of implementing the processes within the newly developed Strategic Communications and Marketing Plan.

A Google Form was created for Township Staff to fill out any time they have a request from the Communications Department, but a more robust system is being planned for 2023.

Continue working with the IT Department and a local engineer on reconfiguring the HOMTV Server Room, including removing old equipment, installing new equipment, labeling and creating new schematics for the updated workflow. Once archival equipment is properly installed in the racks of the HOMTV Server Room, begin the next phase of the digital conversion of HOMTV historic programs, footage and stories into the HOMTV Archive System.

Old equipment has been removed from three of the eight racks in the HOMTV Server Room, along with over 100 cables. The majority of engineering work in the Server Room for 2022 was dedicated to ensuring the new Town Hall Room System would be compatible with the current system.

In support of our local PEG Channels, staff will be discussing and evaluating the future of the channels, including reviewing the franchise agreement. Staff will also work with the local school districts on signal quality and equipment needs.

Staff gathered information on the seven other PEG channels under the Township’s franchise agreement. This included updating the directory with new points of contact for each channel. Manager Diehl sat in on two webinars with the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) to learn more about the franchise renewal and taking the next steps. Manager Diehl also met with the Michigan Community Media Association (MCMA) to

discuss franchising with other PEG stations in Michigan.

Community Engagement Survey

A Community Engagement and Communications Survey was launched on January 28, 2022 to further assist with the Department's communication strategy. The community was asked questions like how they receive Township information, which social platform the use most, the frequency they would like to receive information, etc. The survey generated 241 responses from January 28 to February 8.

Marketing

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. The team continues to analyze each platform's content and community engagement.

Promotional Campaigns

There were multiple promotional campaigns throughout 2022 that the Communications Department assisted the other departments with. These campaigns included press releases, event signage, pre-event signage, social media promotions, video promos, digital paid ads and website pages. Some of the notable ones are listed below.

Harris Nature Center (HNC) celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2022. Throughout the year, the Communications Team shared historical information about the HNC on social media, in digital newsletters, at HNC camps and more. A special 25th anniversary logo was made, as well as a video promo for the 25th anniversary celebration.

The Meridian Heritage Festival occurred in August 2022. The event was able to showcase both the Meridian Historical Village, as well as, the Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center. The Communications Team created digital and printed signage, conducted video promos before and after the event, and utilized paid ads to boost public interest.

Road Construction Updates

The Communications Department provided constant updates for a variety of projects in the Township. The two projects with the most updates were the Okemos Road Bridge Project and the Grand River Avenue Enhancement Project. Due to the everchanging nature of the projects, updates were sent out regularly. Deputy Manager Opsommer worked closely with Communications Staff to provide the information for the updates.

HOMTV Programming

HOMTV produced and aired a total of 30 programs, 56 Township meetings and 40 social media videos in 2022. HOMTV was able to conduct election coverage entirely in-person for the first time since November 2018. All candidate interviews and results shows were held in the HOMTV studio. Interviews were conducted by the interns and Manager Diehl.

This year, HOMTV approached election night coverage differently. Due to the increase in absentee voters and results not coming in until later, Staff decided to try a two-part series. On Tuesday, November 8, a pre-result show aired at 8:00 pm on HOMTV's channel and social media platforms. Multimedia Specialist McDole and Intern Mackenize Dekker hosted the pre-show where they discussed the races and ballot proposal results that would be covered in the result recap show on Thursday, November 10.

The result recap show aired at 8:00 pm on Thursday, November 10. Multimedia Specialist McDole and Mackenize Dekker also hosted this segment. They went over the results from multiple races impacting Meridian Township and the State of Michigan.

HOMTV launched a new show titled 'Catching Up with Kenize' on Friday, December 2. This

show is hosted by Intern Mackenize Dekker and is aims to highlight different attractions in Meridian Township. The first episode was filmed at High Caliber Karting and Entertainment. The second episode aired on December 16 and showed the Christmas in the Village event at the Meridian Historical Village. Since the internship ended mid-December, the show will go on hiatus until 2023. Mackenize will be returning in the spring semester to continue hosting the show until May 2023.

HOMTV Internship Program

A total of 12 interns participated in HOMTV's internship program in 2022, compared to the 26 interns in 2021. This was the first year since before COVID-19 that the internship was conducted entirely in-person. In 2020 and 2021, a mix of hybrid and in-person internships were offered.

Awards

HOMTV was selected as the first-place winner of the NATOA Government Programming Awards for the Public/Community Meetings category. The submission awarded first place was the April 12, 2022 Township Board meeting. HOMTV competed with the City of Moreno Valley, CA, James City County, VA, the City of Los Angeles, CA, the City of Allen, TX, and the City and County of San Francisco, CA. Winners were announced at the awards on September 1, 2022. It has been a decade since HOMTV last won a first-place award with NATOA.

MEMBERS OF THE CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION IN 2022

Tunga Kiyak, Chair
Walter Benenson, Vice Chair
Leslie Charles, Commissioner
Lisa Whiting-Dobson, Commissioner
Brian Seipel, Commissioner
Vacant, Alternate Commissioner
Mike Nevells, Alternate Commissioner
Deborah Guthrie, Township Board Liaison

TEAM MEMBERS

Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Andrea Smiley, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist
Danneisha McDole, Multimedia Production & Operations Specialist

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Development continued at a rapid clip in 2022, with very similar numbers to the levels of construction in 2021. The lingering effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic manifested themselves in a series of supply chain shortages that affected a number of projects. Despite this, 2022 ended up being was one of the busier years on record for the Department of Community Planning and Development. Our Code Enforcement work in Winslow Mobile Home Park continues and although some progress has been made, a substantial amount of work remains. Our rental inspection program continues to recover from scheduling issues during the pandemic and we hope to be fully on track by summer. Our customer service focus continues in the Department 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

2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Completing a series of ‘quality of life’ ordinance amendments to help residents with frequent issues.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of 15 ordinance amendments in 2022. A number of these were ‘quality of life’ amendments to help the average homeowner, including two major changes in the Lake Lansing overlay standards, a small deck ordinance amendment, and modifications to the ZBA standards of review, which most commonly impact residential homeowners. Staff believes this work is a good first step towards making our ordinance more user friendly and we will continue down this path where we see opportunities.

Consolidate the number of Single-Family Residential and Multiple-Family Residential zoning districts.

The Planning Commission recommended and the Township Board approved the elimination of two single-family zoning districts, bringing our total down to six, plus the Village of Nemoka district. The two eliminations were the easiest changes, as they only resulted in the necessary

rezoning of seven total properties. Further changes will require substantial work, and Staff will continue to evaluate opportunities, especially on the non-residential side.

Review the Existing Land Use Map and patterns in the Township in preparation for the Master Plan update.

The Planning Commission and Staff met multiple times throughout the year to review existing land uses throughout the Township and identify potential conflicts that should be addressed during the Master Plan for Land Use update. This information will be incorporated into the update to the Master Plan.

Determine the best approach for implementation of Form Based Code principles in the West Grand River Avenue corridor.

Staff has not been able to formulate a solid approach for moving a form-based code forward and believe that it may make more sense to modify our existing standards to achieve many of the same goals. Reducing setbacks/establishing build to lines, modifying parking standards, and allowing mixed use by right in certain zoning districts are all a part of a form-based code that could easily be incorporated into the existing structure of our Zoning Ordinance. Staff will continue to look for opportunities to encourage redevelopment in the West Grand River Avenue corridor.

Kick off the 2022 update to the Township's Master Plan for Land Use.

A notice of intent to plan was issued by the Planning Commission at their August 8th meeting. Initial public meetings have been held and we are on track up to fully update the plan in 2023.

Continue to work with both the City of Mason and the City of East Lansing on process improvements relating to all Building permits.

Throughout the year, we've improved our processes with both of our partners. Mason inspections are now entirely digital and we have real time access to their databases in the field, allowing us to work more efficiently. With East Lansing, we have worked to streamline our inspection scheduling, which will improve further in 2023 with the advent of digital permitting. We will continue to work on these items as part of our daily work, to improve our delivery of service.

Investigate the potential of going completely paperless for all permitting.

After investigation, Staff requested funding, which was included in the 2023 Township budget, to move our Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical permits to electronic systems. This will lay the groundwork for all remaining Building permits to go paperless in 2023. This will be a monumental improvement to our workflow and our customer service.

Update the standards of review for the Zoning Board of Appeals to be more in line with the State enabling legislation.

After review by the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, the Township Board approved an ordinance to streamline the ZBA standards of review. This was completed in May of 2022 and the ZBA reports that their deliberations have been much more effective under the revised standards.

Complete Meridian Township's recertification in the Redevelopment Ready Communities program.

In conjunction with Neighborhoods and Economic Development Director Clark, Staff has made progress on our recertification in the RRC program, which is formally due in 2023. Staff meet with RRC Staff and have a roadmap forward for recertification, which we are preparing to discuss with the Planning Commission and Township Board early in 2023.

Update all applications, forms, and fees that the Department utilizes.

Staff completed a comprehensive review of our fee structure, which was incorporated into the 2023 budget. Our applications were updated for Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical. We will be working on the remaining applications and other forms this Winter, as our other work slows down.

Modernize Vehicular Parking Standards for new developments in the Township.

Staff has begun work on this item, but we are not in a position to present a draft to the Planning Commission for review. This goal will roll over to 2023, where we will be able to complete it.

2022 COMMISSION AND BOARD MEMBERS

(* indicates former member)

PLANNING COMMISSION

Mark Blumer, Chair
Peter Trezise, Vice-Chair
Jerry Richards, Secretary
*David Premoe
*Holly Cordill

Alisande Shrewsbury
Bill McConnell
Christina Snyder
*Scott Hendrickson

The Planning Commission continued to be busy in 2022. Public Hearings were held and recommendations made on one rezoning request, eleven unique Special Use Permit requests, and one Planned Unit Development request. The biggest new project that was reviewed and recommended for approval was the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development at Haslett Village Square, redeveloping the remainder of the mostly vacant shopping center. This will be the largest development in Haslett in decades. The Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval on fifteen text amendments, one of which was a complete overhaul of the sign ordinance, the culmination of over a year’s worth of work by Staff and the Commission.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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

James Koenig
*David Premoe
*Scott Hendrickson

The Zoning Board of Appeals heard a total of 18 different requests in 2022. Part of the way through the year, several ordinance amendments were adopted that aided the ZBA, including the modification of their standards of review to be more usable. The requests in 2022 covered exiting commercial buildings, signage, existing and proposed residential structures, and the proposed MSU to Lake Lansing pathway. One variance request was denied for an after the fact variance for work that was done without a permit.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

*Steven Vagnozzi
Bob Lovell, Vice-Chair
Kathy Sundland, Township Board Representative
*Joyce Van Coevering

Karla Hudson
Tim Potter
Joshua Robertson

The Transportation Commission took a strong interest in non-motorized transportation options in 2022. They worked with Staff to get MDOT to include pedestrian safety islands in multiple locations during the Grand River Avenue reconstruction. They also aided Staff in applying for the Bicycle Friendly Community program, which resulted in Meridian Township receiving an honorable mention and excellent feedback on how to proceed on our journey

towards becoming more bike friendly. The Commission continues to be an excellent resource on all things transportation related.

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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

Joyce Van Coevering
Frank L. Walsh
John Matuszak

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority had an extremely productive year. They reviewed two different brownfield plans for the Village of Okemos, eventually recommending approval on the revised one. They reviewed and recommended approval on the brownfield plan for the Haslett Village Square redevelopment. They reviewed and recommended approval on the first amendment to the brownfield plan for American House of Meridian (formerly known as Pine Village). Previously approved plans for the Haslett Marathon and Joe's on Jolly finished construction and reimbursement is expected to begin in 2023.

BUILDING BOARD OF APPEALS

*Charles Wallin
Pete Potterpin
*David Premoe

The Building Board of Appeals did not need to meet in 2022, but a meeting is already scheduled for 2023.

TEAM MEMBERS

Timothy R. Schmitt, AICP, Director of Community Planning and Development
John Heckaman, Building Official
Debbie Budzynski, Administrative Assistant II
Jaime Barrows, 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, Senior Code Enforcement Officer
Keith Chapman, Assistant Planner
Brian Shorkey, AICP, Senior Planner

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Potential Intensity Change Area (PICA) Redevelopment

Meridian Township established the goal of ‘infill development’ to maintain and activate dilapidated commercial properties. These areas we call PICAs (Potential Intensity Change Areas) are major intersections of Okemos, Haslett, and Carriage Hills, areas. The Okemos PICA, designated at the intersections of Okemos/Hamilton and through the Downtown Development Authority is actively pursuing the development of the 206 unit, mixed use residential project. The developer, Village of Okemos LLC, submitted a request to amend their approved MUPUD (Mixed Use Planned Unit Development) from June 2021 to include two parking decks to accommodate parking and create 6 new residential units on the first floor, in August 2022. This request came when a potential tenant determined not to move forward with moving into the planned development. High-interest rates, inflation, and other mitigating financial costs have delayed the project. In November, the Township Board approved the local Brownfield plan for the project to support site contamination cleanup. The Township has met every responsibility to the developer for the project as approved. Applications to the State of Michigan Brownfield Redevelopment Authority are in progress currently. Additionally, stormwater management, public road improvement, and the burial or raising of the High Voltage Distribution line from Consumers Energy will have to be financed.

The Haslett PICA, designated at the intersections of Haslett/Marsh roads has moved the needle on redevelopment progressively. The approved redevelopment at 1673 Haslett Road has begun; this project was previously referred to as “Pine Village.” Now known as, the American House Meridian project, as the operator Redico has taken control of the development. The project includes 149 units for 55+ independent seniors with an approved mixed-use planned unit development 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. The site will include a pathway connection to the interurban and other amenities to support independent living at a centralized locale. Demolition of the existing one-story building began on July 5, 2022. Some small supply chain delays and weather have impacted the project; however, it has not stalled since construction launched. During the construction launch, Meridian Township staff amended the approved Brownfield Plan for the site. The initial Brownfield Plan included estimated project costs and an option for the demolition of a portion of 1655 Haslett Road. This caused some confusion as the developer decided against the demolition of the other property. To clean up the approved Brownfield Plan and agreement, Director Schmitt and Clark

amended the entire plan to accurately reflect the current costs and status of the project. All the leasable commercial space of the site is under contract with a local Haslett business, and residential leasing should open in the summer of 2023. The project is expected to open in January 2024.

The Haslett Marathon at 1619 Haslett Road, successfully opened in August of 2022 with Saroki's Chicken and Pizza as a major draw to the community. The Haslett Marathon is a staple of the Haslett community, being the starter seed for what created the Haslett Beautification Association. The Haslett Marathon received support for an approved local Brownfield Plan to address any source contamination related to the gas pumps for the business. This local incentive supported the overall redevelopment of the site into the one-stop service station it is today. Full-service automotive assistance, large retail area, fast food options, and gas. This site is an attractive active location for the Haslett community. The updated parking areas allow for easy, safe, and accessible movement on the property. This is 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. As the Village of Okemos project continues through its challenges, another property has been listed for sale at the corner of Hamilton and Okemos. The site is prime and holds most of the remaining small business operations in the DDA.

The financial status of the DDA is stronger now that the Township approved to remove the debt owed from the DDA. With a general fund balance of about \$85,000 the DDA began to investigate options for reinvestment back into DDA properties. With a unanimous vote, the DDA launched their 10% match for Match on Main, a \$25,000 reimbursement program offered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. This program allows the DDA to provide added benefit for local businesses within the Authority looking to make improvements to their property, train staff or other enhancements. MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) announced the Meridian Township DDA as a recipient of the Match on Main reimbursement in November of 2022. The DDA is proud to support Douglas J as a recipient of the Match on Main Program. As an initiator of the Downtown Development Authority, Douglas J has focused on revitalizing the district since inception. The Village of Okemos project delays required Douglas J to make changes to their current site and designate it as the 'flagship' location for Douglas J Salons. We are proud to support this reinvestment into the DDA.

Meridian Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

The EDC moved into 2022 focused on small business assistance and preservation during the Grand River Avenue and Okemos Bridge construction. A major goal to assist the small businesses in any way possible was the focus. The first step produced a shop local campaign with "Shop Local" signs along Grand River Avenue and Okemos Road. Navigating the series of detours, due to both construction projects occurring simultaneously, made it difficult for travelers to stop by the local businesses. To make the pathway to get access to the commercial complexes simple, Director Clark launched several public campaigns related to Okemos and Grand River Avenue construction.

"Mob the Roadblock" was a shop local drop-in opportunity supported by the Meridian Area Business Association. Several members of the community took a few hours after work to shop and support local businesses that were experiencing a reduction in foot traffic. Communicating the details of the construction, as well as, the "Bonus Bucks" gift card program supported several attempts to get people into businesses and shopping in stores.

In 2022, the Meridian EDC included the Meridian Motorfest", 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 \$1,000 supported two trophies, a community and children’s choice selection. The best cars that fell into that category were awarded the trophy with Meridian Township EDC branded on the trophy. Jordan Munsters, owner of High Caliber Karting, was a 2022 10 over the next 10 recipient, as well as, “Best of Town” top finalist.

It was also the priority of the Meridian EDC to launch the first Freedom Fest, Meridian Township Juneteenth celebration. Juneteenth 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. The 2022 Juneteenth festival was a good start to provide the community with access to diverse activities in the Township.

Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)

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 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 construction project began in May of 2022 and completed most of the road work by November 2022. Repaving the Marsh Road intersection and adding three crosswalks will be included in Spring of 2023. The 18-month construction timeline was delayed due to weather and some supply issues. The scale of this project was massive and the communication of MDOT assisted Meridian Township Staff to adequately address issues during the construction. Communication with the businesses along Grand River Avenue through the duration allowed business owners an avenue to speak with MDOT on issues during construction like construction crew equipment/staff members parking, access to sites, and other issues. The installation of the crosswalks will be located within the 4900, 2900, and 1800 blocks of Grand River Avenue in the median of the 5-lane road. This portion of the construction will occur Spring and Summer of 2023.

The redevelopment of 2010 West Grand River Avenue from Burger King to Buddy’s Pizza was long-awaited by the public. With a March opening, Buddy’s Pizza provided free Pizzas for a year to the first 100 customers. A cross collaborative ribbon cutting was produced by the Greater Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and Meridian Township. 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. In November 2022, the west side Buddy’s Pizza location closed, and now Meridian Township is Buddy’s Pizza’s only location in the Lansing region. Buddy’s Pizza has shown a great affinity for public engagement and service since opening.

New Businesses

Meridian Township 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 systems. The high functioning of our local schools and the financial stability of Meridian combined, is a reason for the 10% increase in population in a decade. Reducing debt related to Township wide activities from the DDA to the debt for the new Fire Station could be reduced more over the next 5 years. The impact of reducing this debt should support more amenities for Township residents.

In 2022, Meridian Township welcomed 35 new single families to the community. Most of these are in

the Haslett Public Schools area with Copper Creek and Silverstone property completions. Meridian also welcomed 8 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
Peter Campbell, Secretary/Treasurer
Bill Cawood
Vacant, Vice-Chair
Patricia Herring Jackson, Township Supervisor

James Spanos
Will Randle
Scott Weaver
Angela Wright
Thomas Stanko, Chair

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
Adam Carlson
Tom Conway

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

Chris Nugent
Patricia Herring Jackson, Township Supervisor
Barry Goetz
Vacant, Vice-Chair

Kellie Johnson
Bruce Peffers, Chair
Chris Rigterink

TEAM MEMBERS

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

FIRE/EMS



Serving our Community with Pride, Integrity and Professionalism since 1929.

On behalf of the members of the Meridian Township Fire Department, it is my pleasure to present our 2022 Annual Report. This comprehensive report summarizes the responses, activities, training, and the resulting statistical data for the year. While 2022 had its challenges, it also saw significant opportunities and growth in our Department. Our highly skilled and motivated firefighters, officers, and inspectors navigated the ever-changing post-pandemic landscape, continuing to provide top-notch emergency care to our Township. Our emergency response calls continued to increase with 6081 total calls in 2022, an 8% increase compared to 2021.

In 2022, with support from the Township Board and Township Manager, we increased staffing from 32 to 34 firefighters in Fire Operations to help with the increase in service requests. We held three promotional processes (some which carried into January 2023) to fill Training Chief, Battalion Chief, and Captain positions that were vacated due to retirements. We hired four new firefighter/paramedics and two firefighter/EMTs. Hiring EMTs was a new challenge for us, but necessary given the statewide paramedic shortage. Working with Township leadership and our Union we developed a plan to hire and sponsor EMTs to paramedic training which would lead to their state paramedic licensure.

Community engagement returned to pre-COVID numbers throughout the year as we worked with the community and local schools doing public education and smoke detector programs. This was accomplished via station tours and our fire safety program in schools. We were also pleased that after three years we were able to hold our annual Open House in October during National Fire Prevention Month.

We continued to foster strong relationships with our neighboring fire departments through planning, training, and emergency response. Over the year, we trained and responded with fire departments from East Lansing, Delhi Township, Mason, NIESA, Lansing Township, Bath, and Lansing. We look forward to continued cooperation with these outstanding departments as we work to make our communities safer places to work, live, and play.

As Fire Chief, I am honored to lead Meridian Township Fire Department. I would like to thank all the members of our Fire Department for their commitment and professionalism as they serve our community daily. I would also like to thank Manager Walsh, as well as, the other Township Staff, Elected Officials, and Boards for their support over the year. We could not accomplish what we do without their support. 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 44,935 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.

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. In 2022, we started the process of identifying buildings/occupancies and inspection schedules to develop a plan for completing inspections based on high, medium, and low risk occupancies according to national standards and best practices. This process consists of the following steps:

1. Use the Apartment Rental Inspection List from the Building Department as our top priority for high risk inspection scheduling. This allows us to tackle several higher concentration life safety occupancies in quick order. The number of units and buildings per complex varies greatly. For scheduling purposes, we use the inspection time estimates list and adjust as needed. In an effort to reduce the amount of time needed to complete inspections, we are working on a plan to use our operations staff who have required NFPA Inspector 1 certifications.
2. Conduct a definitive Community Risk Assessment (CRA). Conducting a CRA to identify all commercial buildings and occupancies within Meridian Township establishes our master list of buildings requiring inspections. Once that list is developed, it can then be applied to the NFPA 1730 Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations. Through this document, these buildings can be categorized into an improved scheduling matrix for

completing inspections, as well as estimate time and personnel requirements needed to keep the overall inspection schedule on target.

3. Initiate an Engine Company Inspection Program (ECIP). With the completion of the CRA, a significant portion of buildings and occupancies identified as low risk can be assigned to the ECIP for completion in their normally scheduled rotation (three years). With personnel investment it can be launched in conjunction with the other tasks as mentioned above.

Training

In 2022, TJ Booms was promoted to Training Chief with the retirement of Bill Priese. Chief Booms has been revamping our Training Division and working on a new training plan to move forward past the COVID pandemic. This plan will encompass current required training, as well as, new training to increase our ability to function at higher aptitudes. The Department's adjunct instructors will utilize their expertise to advance our knowledge base. As a Paramedic/Firefighter there is a tremendous amount of training required to maintain certifications, licensure, and job efficiency. The Training Chief is responsible for coordinating and providing this training.

All Meridian Township firefighters are state-certified Firefighter I, II and state-licensed paramedics. Paramedics must earn 45 continuing education credits and renew their licenses every three years. We require each paramedic to be certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS). The initial certification courses are 24 hours each followed by eight hours of recertification every two years. 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, incident command, emergency driving, hazardous materials, ice and water rescue, extrication, confined space operations and medical care for the sick and injured.

Our fire officers carry Fire Officer I, II, and III certifications based on rank. These courses allow the officer to learn fire ground and day-to-day leadership skills.

The Department worked in conjunction with other METRO Departments to complete live drills on a vacant building in 2022. This allowed firefighters to practice search and rescue, ventilations, hose advancement, and forcible entry. 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.

Continuing to keep Meridian Township safe, in 2022 the Training Division trained parks and police staff in CPR & First Aid, as well as, provided continuing education.

Fire Operations

Fire Operations is composed of shift operations consisting of 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 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 Fire Administration. The Battalion Chiefs are responsible for command and control of most emergency incidents in the Township.

The Township's fire district is geographically divided into three districts each containing one fire station. The three fire stations are strategically located to support quicker response. Each station houses an ambulance, fire pumper, and one station also houses our ladder truck.

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

The year 2022 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, maintaining the stations' apparatus and equipment, and performing annual inspections.

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 recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, our total call volume increased to 6081 calls, which was 8% higher than 2021. Of the 6081 calls, 5286 were EMS calls, an increase of 14% from 2021.

Below is a table showing total fire and EMS incidents over a ten-year period from 2013-2022 (Fig. 1). Figures 2 and 3 show the number of fire calls (Fig. 2) and medical calls (Fig. 3) in 2022 categorized by dispatch type. The final chart compares total EMS calls by month in 2021 and 2022 (Fig. 4).

10 Year Incident Count-Fig 1			
Year	Fire Incidents	EMS Incidents	Total Incidents
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	1,217	4,220	5,437
2020	875	4,031	4,906
2021	963	4627	5,590
2022	795	5,286	6,081

Confirmed Fire Responses Dispatch Type-Fig 2	
HAMIN – Hazmat	3
FBURN – Illegal burns	36
FSTRUC – Residential Structure fire	73
FMAJOR – Commercial Building fire	4
FSTILL – Smoke Investigation	59
FALARMS – Fire Alarms	324
FBRUCH – Brush Fire	25
CAR/ Dumpster fire	124
UTILF – Utility Poll fire / wires down	72

Stuck in elevator	4
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Medical Responses Dispatch Type-Fig 3	
MED - Start EMD	1,314
MEDIC – Medical response	456
MEDICA – Alpha response	776
MEDICB – Bravo response	279
MEDICC – Charlie response	746
MEDICD – Delta response	716
MEDICE – Echo response	48
PIACCF – Injury Accident	132
CITAST – Fallen and can't get up	459
DROWN – Lake or river	5
PINNIN vehicle accident	20
UNKACCF – Unknown Injury accident	20
MUTAMB – Mutual Aid medical	490
SHOOTF – Assault gun	1
STABF – Assault knife	2

EMS Calls by Month	2021	2022
January	416	517
February	364	428
March	449	471
April	398	513
May	479	478
June	486	486
July	479	571
August	496	473
September	518	489
October	542	552
November	477	538
December	485	538

Fig. 4

2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Outdoor Warning Sirens

In 2022, Meridian Township Fire Department continued the project to install emergency warning sirens throughout the Township to alert residents to severe weather and other emergencies. The eleventh siren was installed at Bennett Woods Elementary. The goal is to finish installation of the five remaining sirens by 2026.

Fire Department Safety Equipment

Since 2018, the Department has worked hard to be fiscally responsible by managing the budget while evaluating its operation. 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 emergency response vehicles.

Vehicles

In 2022, the Department took possession of the long-awaited ladder truck, a new ambulance and command vehicle. With the supply chain issues across the country, it now takes up to three years to build new ladder trucks, pumpers, and engines. Because of these delays, in 2022 we ordered a new ambulance for a late 2024 delivery.

Department Policies

In 2022, a goal was set to update all Standard Operating Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures that are outdated. The following eight operational polices and one COVID-19 policy was updated in 2022.

- Personal Appearance
- UTV Use
- Post Fire Gross Decontamination
- SCBA Cleaning and Disinfecting
- Medical Treatment and Reporting
- Conference and Workshop Request
- Medical Treatment and Reporting
- Hose Testing

In 2022, a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was developed and will be presented for Township Board approval in January 2023. This plan outlines each Township department's roles and responsibilities during emergencies. Meridian Township's COOP plan consists of the Basic Plan, a comprehensive 30-page document that covers the entire Township, along with the COOP Functional Annex and Support Plan for each department.

Additionally, a Damage Assessment Plan was developed and approved by the Township Board. The Damage Assessment Plan formalizes the process for performing damage assessment during large-scale disasters. This is key to documenting critical infrastructure losses that may result in federal dollar reimbursement.

Grants

In 2022, the Department received a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant for \$132,327 that will pay for sponsoring new and part-time employees to paramedic training leading to state licensure.

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 throughout the state and across the country. This has prompted the department to consider creative ways to recruit and fill vacant positions. In 2022, we hired two EMT/firefighters and have sponsored them to a paramedic course concurrent with their first 18 months of employment. This was a change from our traditional hiring process in which only paramedic/firefighters were eligible to fill open positions;

however, it was necessary given the paramedic shortage and is proving to be a good solution to a growing problem.

MTFD TEAM

FIRE CHIEF

Michael Hamel

ADMINISTRATION

Christine Cassidy, Admin Asst. II

Tavis Millerov, Fire Marshal

TJ Booms, Training/EMS Chief

BATTALION CHIEFS

Mark Vroman

Ken Phinney

CAPTAINS

Chris Johnson

Ryan Campbell

Rudy Gonzales

LIEUTENANTS

John McDermott

Jason Hillard

Jason Everest

Bob Caretti

Jeff Rommeck

Sam Weber

Al Diaz

FIREFIGHTERS

Brian Pennell

Corey Pant

Eddie Dennis

Amanda Arnett

Erik Sellen

Chuck Malesko

Corey Pant

Nate Lafayette

Benjamin Haviland

Tony Kozlowski

Gavin Ulman

Don Carr

RJ Lewis

Tyler McNalley

Dustin Farhat

Angela Kohls

Jared Gentner

Steven Garelik

Joseph Harrison

Michael Weber

Timothy Brighton

Nicholas Irving

Steven Schott

Andrew Zaleski

Retirements

Bill Priese

Bill Richardson

Mark Vroman

Resignations

Dan Ackles

Promotions

TJ Booms (Training Chief)

Chris Johnson (Captain)

Bob Caretti (Lieutenant)

Sam Weber (Lieutenant)

Ryan Campbell (Battalion Chief)

MERIDIAN Cares *Making a Difference*

Meridian Cares, the Township’s Human Services program, aims to strengthen the community safety net for Township residents facing financial hardship. The emergency needs fund provides temporary assistance to these households, and aims to prevent them from facing further crises such as eviction or utility shut-offs. These households are provided with additional resources and referrals as needed.

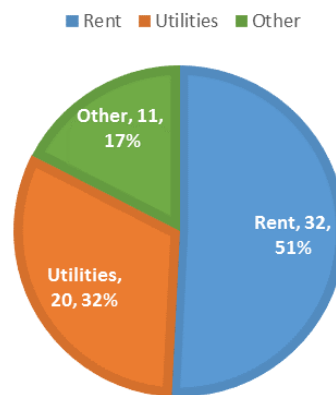
Total expenditures in 2022 totalled \$38,665. This includes funds used for the School Backpacks Program, bulk Redi-Ride pass purchases, and spending from the Emergency Needs Fund.

63 households in total were assisted in 2022. 51% of these were for rent payments, 32% for utility bills, and 17% other. “Other” includes assistance with transportation, or other essential needs.

The human services program received \$27,332 in donations, excluding Knob Hill apartment fire relief donations.

282 discounted Redi-Ride passes were provided to the community. The Township receives a 40% discount on these passes from Capital Area Transportation Authority.

ASSISTANCE TYPE



Back-to-School Backpacks

With the help of Meridian Cares, Kiwanis of Haslett-Okemos, and other generous donors, we were able to pack 500 backpacks with high quality school supplies. 200 backpacks were delivered to Haslett Public Schools, and the remaining 300 went to Okemos elementary and middle schools. The total cost for this project was \$6,885.85, with \$5,750 being covered by donations.

Holiday Baskets

In partnership with local churches and Haslett-Okemos Rotary club, 228 food baskets were delivered to low income households in the Township for Thanksgiving and December Holidays. 21 baskets were delivered to qualifying families for Easter 2022.

Knob Hill Fire

In addition to the 63 households assisted by Meridian Cares in 2022, 38 checks were given to the families displaced by the Knob Hill apartment fire. Total donations received for Knob Hill fire relief were \$120,717.76, and of this, \$115,638.06 has been spent so far.

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.

2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Contract Negotiations

Successful contract negotiations were completed for our four unions whose contracts were set to expire on December 31, 2022. Administrative Professionals, Non-Supervisory Professionals, and Department of Public Works and Parks and Recreation contracts settled 5-year contracts effective January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2027. The Supervisory Professionals negotiated a 3-year contract from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2025. Wage adjustments include 3% increases each year for the duration of the contract with a 5% increase at the top of their wage scales. Juneteenth has been added to as a paid Township holiday and the contract language was reviewed in order to reflect language and wording that aligns with its mission to support its DEI initiatives.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Our DEI Taskforce began meeting monthly in order to solidify framework that the Township will use annually to set training, put on internal and external DEI events, and otherwise honor and celebrate our diversity. At the end of every year, the Task Force will be able to evaluate its effectiveness and impact, and plan for the coming year.

Employee Traffic

In 2022, the Township welcomed 33 new hires among all of our departments, including police officers, firefighters, seasonal workers and more. In addition, we had a tremendous response for temporary election workers. More than 150 people signed up to work for the Township throughout the election cycle. We appreciate all of our Team and glad for those who joined us in 2022.

Recruitment and Retention

In addition to a 1% increase for staff and a 1.5% increase for police, fire, and public works employees, the Board approved the Township's proposed Recruitment and Retention plan for police officers and firefighters in the second quarter of 2022. A wage scale realignment, resulting in higher pay, was approved and implemented for Police and Fire in May and June, respectively. A one-time lump sum retention payment was approved for all permanent Township staff. The payments were received by staff in June.

COVID-19

Policy and protocol remains in place to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. In alignment with the emergency orders that have been extended nationwide, the Township continues its dedicated effort to work with staff who are symptomatic or test positive for the virus. We've had more than 200 opportunities to help employees work through the process and ensure we are doing everything we can to protect each other and our community.

TEAM MEMBERS

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

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



In 2022, most Information Technology activities revolved around projects designed by and implemented in conjunction with our third party consultant, Brightline IT. This included new switches at most of our facilities, Integration of new Internet and intra-facility connections, new security infrastructure at our main sites, and implementation of new local infrastructure & cloud services that significantly enhance our business continuity posture across the entire organization.

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.

2022 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, many other new important initiatives were prominent throughout 2022. These included, but were not limited to the following:

Technology Evaluation and Planning

The technology team continued work with our third party consultant, Brightline IT to finalize plans for and begin execution of major hardware and software upgrades across the entire organization. The final report was completed in early March, and after careful review, the executive summary was delivered to the Township Board in May. Subsequently, the Board designated \$970,248 of American Rescue Plan (ARP) dollars to fund most of the projects recommended in the report.

Network Switching Infrastructure

With the last comprehensive upgrade to the Township's infrastructure in 2005, the technology team worked with Brightline IT to install switches at the Township Hall Building, the Public Safety Building, the Service Center, and all three fire stations. The new switches have made a marked improvement in performance across all facilities.

Digital Border Security Enhancements

The technology team continued work with Brightline IT to install new firewall devices at our Township Hall facility. Companion devices were on back order for five of our other facilities, but are expected to be installed in the first quarter of 2023.

Expansion of Network Connection Services throughout our Facilities

The technology team worked with a variety of providers to improve site to site connections throughout our facilities, to improve pricing, and to enhance available services both internally, and also with third party municipal partners with whom we share services, such as East Lansing & Ingham County. These connections will play a large part in 2023 projects to deploy a smart network that is able to use all available connections to minimize downtime between our different connectivity points.

Security Training Initiatives for all Employees

Staff pushed security-training programs to all end users. This provided insight to digital security, and the essential role we all play in keeping our network and data secure. Following one of the recommendations in the training, IT then pushed two-factor authentication to all Office 365 users across the organization.

Expanded Hardware Pool used to Support Resident's Privacy & Mental Health & Training

The IT Department worked with the Police Department to purchase & configure additional Teams enabled tablets to allow wider use than in 2021. These devices allow trained psychologists to confer directly with at-risk patients at the point an officer recognizes the need for additional support. IT staff deployed an additional five iPads for enhanced training initiatives focused on training new recruits to the policies associated with our Police Department accreditation.

Converted from a Shared Law Enforcement Information Network to Hosted Service

The IT Department worked with the Police Department to reconfigure our connection to the Law Enforcement Information Network & National Crime Information Center networks. Previously we shared a service with the City of East Lansing, but came to a point that autonomy was essential to provide a stable service. The Police Department now connects directly via the software vendor.

Moved Zoll Fire Records Management Server from East Lansing to Meridian Township

IT worked with the Fire Department to move the Fire Department Records Management System to Meridian Township infrastructure. Previously Meridian and the City of East Lansing collaborated on the shared system, but when the City moved onto a different Records Management System (RMS), it only made sense to move the data to a Meridian Township resource.

Expansion of Cellular Services

Some vehicles were using legacy 3-G cellular data devices to push information back to our Cartograph Work Order Management System. IT staff worked with the garage to replace these devices. All devices are now running on the 4-G (LTE) data network.

Continued Expansion of Cloud-Based Assets.

IT staff worked with end user Departments to increase utilization of OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams, and other applications to support virtual operations. These activities will continue over all of 2023.

Expanded Use of Helpdesk

This system responds to requests for technical support 24 hour a day, 366 days a year. Staff continues to work with the third party provider to increase to the greatest possible extent our ability for simple issues to be handled and/or at least triaged prior to being referred to Meridian Township Staff. While there is

still room for improvement, this service is in turn helping to increase IT 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 Brightline, Avalon, CDW-G, & Logicalis consulting services to expand knowledge of Network Technicians as they perform activities related to desktop, server, and network projects undertaken throughout 2022.

Routine Items

The Department serviced over 420 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



2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Parks and Pathway Maintenance

The Park Maintenance Division manages the upkeep of much of our community's public spaces and does so to a very high standard. Areas under their purview include our 1,000-acre park system, 78-miles of pedestrian-bicycle pathway, 20-miles of park trails, 22 park restrooms, 8 pavilions, 2 dog parks, field preparation for all youth and adult sports programs, special event set up and clean-up and multiple special projects.

Regular activities include mowing, tree trimming and cleaning up downed trees from storms, emptying park trash, snowplowing parking lots and pathways, chipping Christmas trees, mulching garden beds, maintaining sports fields, trail maintenance, playground maintenance, dog park maintenance, pavilion cleaning, cleaning and maintaining park restrooms, watering DDA and Meridian Garden Club flower beds in the summer, repairing pathways, maintaining irrigation at various locations, raising and lowering flags when necessary, and assisting the Sewer, Water and Buildings Departments where needed.

Special Projects in 2022 included:

- Built and installed a Sled Library at North Meridian Road Park to provide free sleds for public use
- Built and installed new Snowshoe Racks for rentals at Harris Nature Center
- Upgraded the pole barn at the new Okemos Road property; cleaned up the landscape in preparation for future use
- Constructed five dumpster corrals in parks to improve aesthetics
- Installed four foul poles at Towner Road Park
- Completed brick paver replacements around the Gazebo at the Historical Village
- Painted and moved a POD to Marketplace as a permanent location for the food assistance program and information booth.
- Installed new collapsible bollards at various trail/pathway entrances
- Installed an AED at Towner Road Park
- Upgraded the restroom building at the Marketplace with insulated ceilings and heat to make the facility usable year-round.
- Assisted with the assembly and launch of the 5 floating islands in Central Park South
- Installed new signs at Lake Lansing Marsh and Spengler Marsh
- Built and installed a new ice skate lending closet for the Marketplace rink
- Along with DPW, removed 135 dead deer from pathways and roads

- Installed artificial ice rink at Marketplace; maintained it weekly, dis-assembled and stored for the summer

Harris Nature Center (HNC) Facility/Programming Report

The Harris Nature Center continued as a shining gem in our park system providing opportunities for environmental education, outdoor recreation, wildlife viewing and an accessible trail for a peaceful walk in the woods. The year 2022 was a banner year for the Nature Center as it celebrated its 25th Anniversary on July 22nd, opened its new picnic pavilion new restroom building and doubled its drop-in visitor volume from 2021 with 5,229.

- Conducted nine virtual programs to school groups from all over the United States as part of the MSU annual Science Festival engaging 213 students
- Created a “Social Story” for the website so people can know what to expect when they visit
- Worked with Able Eyes to create a virtual tour of the inside and outside of the nature center that is available online to the public
- Opened the new accessible Observation Deck donated by the HNC Foundation
- Hosted 2 Native Plant Sales (spring and fall) and sold over \$8,000 in native plants
- Opened the Mole Hill play feature in the Nature Exploration Area

Harris Nature Center Foundation

- Paved the trail to the new Observation Deck
- Hosted 3 Music in Nature events bringing entertainment in the woods to 171 visitors!
- Continued with brick sales for the Pavilion Patio
- Purchased a washer and dryer for the nature center
- Worked with a local photographer to create a 2023 nature calendar to sell to the public as a fundraiser
- Hosted Turtle Toast event featuring live music and light refreshments. 38 people attended and the Foundation plans to make this an annual event
- Funded 11 school bus scholarships for a total of \$1200

Quick Facts: • Hosted eight weeks of Annie’s Big Nature Lesson with 333 students • 3,229 in-person program participants • 3,442 total program participants • 485 summer camp participants • 213 virtual program participants • 11 pavilion rentals

Farmers’ Market Report

The Farmers’ Market has grown dramatically since moving to Marketplace on the Green both in the vendor participation and customer visits. The Market operated every Saturday May – October, every other Saturday November – April and on Wednesdays from June through August for a total of 64 Market Days. In total, there were 88 returning vendors and 63 new vendors and 94,000 customers served. The Market also hosted many special events in conjunction with the Green Team, solar demonstrations, recycling events, food composting and added a food gleaning program where vendors donate their leftover produce for donations to local food banks. Also, a total of \$42,364 in food assistance transactions occurred throughout the year.

Senior Center

Providing a place for older adults to engage socially and keep their minds and bodies active, is an important element to being a prime community. The Meridian Senior Center located in Chippewa Middle School served a membership of 287 older adults with nearly 1,500 programs, events, and fitness activities throughout 2022. The Senior Center added 37 new members this year.

Deer Management – 12th Year

The Parks and Recreation Department placed and managed 70 hunters on 1,600 acres of parks and land preserves (42 properties) during the 2022 Deer Management Archery Program, as well as, on 22 private properties. The total deer harvested by the archers was 156 and volunteer resident hunters dedicated a total of 3,518 hours of service. The program operated from September 1- December 31 with 1,900 total pounds of venison donated.

Recreation Programs

The Recreation Division was running on all cylinders in 2022 with multiple programs and events!
Okemos

- K-6th Spring Season/485; Fall Season/469; Total = 954
- K-7th Grade Flag Football Program: 106
- 1st-8th Grade Baseball Programs: 99
- 1st-8th Grade Softball Program: 99

Haslett

- K-6th Grade Spring Soccer/271; Fall Season/206; Total = 477
- K-6th Grade Basketball Program: 284
- K-7th Flag Football Program: 132
- 1st-5th Softball Program: 41
- 1st-8th Grade Baseball Program: 94
- T-Ball Program: 90

Williamston

- 1st-4th Grade Baseball Program: 24
- T-Ball Program: 73
- 1st-4th Grade Softball: 13

Other Programs

- Sporties for Shorties: 390 (ages 3-5)
- Adult Kickball Leagues: 9 teams
- Adult Softball Leagues: 7 teams
- 4 on 4 Sand Volleyball Leagues: 20 teams
- 150 registered Seniors participated in exercise class at the Central Park pavilion all year long Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
- Our pickleball courts at Hillbrook and Towner Road Parks host drop-in play at scheduled times daily. Their popularity has skyrocketed since opening in 2017.
- Fitness Over 50 Exercise Group had a total of 95 participants in 2022 and counting new memberships in January, 2023. The group is growing! Georganne only reported 59 participants at the end of 2021. That is 36 new participants since January, 2022. They are loving all of our advertising on the local community event calendars and social media

Special Events

- Here comes Santa Paws 51 pups and their families
- Halloween at the Market Event – 200 kids + families
- Family Moonlight Sledding- 300
- Teen Moonlight Sledding- 100
- Mom to Mom Garage Sale - 47 vendors
- 2 - Skating parties - 75 Participants
- Music at the Market average 200-300+ audience members/week (23 weeks of live music)
- Kids Crafts at the Wednesday Market 25+/-participants each Wednesday
- “Rec on the Move Program” at 4 neighborhood parks 100+/- participants and families at each of the 4 events
- 2 Yappy Hours (dog park parties)- 50
- Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt - 407 kids +families
- Running Club - 37 Participants
- The Large and Small Dog Parks continue to be popular with our residents and their pups! Year-end membership for the large dog park totaled 760 and small dog park 601.

Celebrate Meridian

The largest special event of the year was Celebrate Meridian Festival that occurred on Saturday, June 25. The event took place at Marketplace on the Green and in Central Park with live music, beer and wine tent, food trucks, children’s games and inflatable obstacle courses and fireworks finale. Even with Central Park

Drive remaining open, it all came together. The community-wide celebration was the result of a team effort from nearly every township department, the generosity of local businesses and volunteers.

Meridian Heritage Festival

The Festival took place on October 1 in the Meridian Historical Village. This event is coordinated with Friends of Historic Meridian and Nokomis Learning Center. The event offered historical reenactments, demonstrations, food, music and fun. The 2022 event was the most successful Heritage Festivals in several years!

The Park Ranger Program

The program continues to be an asset in assisting park users during evening hours and weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day. This program has been very successful in providing positive interaction and assistance to park visitors. The program was first implemented in 2001.

Park Pavilion Reservations

The Meridian Township Park System offers eight parks with pavilions for public use. One of our most popular shelters located in Wonch Park, was off-line in 2022 due to the Okemos Road Bridge Replacement Project. The year ended with a total of 247 reservations at pavilions at seven different parks.

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 238 total members (53 new members in 2022) who volunteered 1,121.5 hours across 18 parks and preserves. While removing invasive species is a top stewardship priority, planning native species in their place is just as important. Quick Facts: ● 59 native species collected ● 174 native trees installed at two township preserves ● and estimated 534,128 seeds collected from 20 Township properties. 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: ● 48 stewardship work days performing litter cleanup, invasive species removal, native planting, native seed sowing, wetland buffer restoration, and floating island installation ● 900 native wildflower transplants were implemented at seven parks and preserves.

Love a Park Day and Meridian Service Day

For Love a Park Day, 35 volunteers worked across four Township parks for a total of 68 hours to clean up park sign gardens and plant flowers. Meridian Service Day included 27 volunteers from the Kiwanis Club who worked on two parks for a total of 50 hours.

Community Connection with Michigan State University

Continued work with sustainability and land management courses to do trail stewardship including invasive species management and native plant restoration.

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. Two wetland buffer restorations were completed at Central Park South. Seven Wetland Walks were conducted to educate the public on wetland protection and local ordinances.

Planting a Native Meridian; A Practical Guide to Bringing Native Plants into your Yard

A complete resource for the community on native plant education, released in September of 2022.

Floating Island Installation at Central Park South Pond

Floating islands were planted with ten native wetland flower species and sedges. This water quality initiative approved and organized by the Park Commission and MCC volunteers installed the plants and prepped the islands for launch in June.

Prescribed Burn Management

A successful spring burn took place at Lake Lansing North Preserve in April of 2022.

LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Jamie Hiller, Chair
Steve Thomas, Vice-Chair
Yu Man Lee
Kendra Grasseschi

Kris Parnell
Courtney Wisinski, Township Board Liaison
Mark Stephens, Park Commissioner Liaison

TEAM MEMBERS

Administration

LuAnn Maisner
Bridget Cannon
Kati Adams
Michael Devlin
Nick Wing
Emma Campbell
Kati Adams
Tom Cary

Director of Parks and Recreation
Administrative Assistant II
Parks and Land Preservation Superintendent
Parks and Recreation Specialist
Parks and Recreation Specialist
Land Stewardship Coordinator
Parks, Pathways and Land Preservation Superintendent
Farmers’ Market Manager

Harris Nature Center

Allison Goodman
Kathryn Page
Elizabeth Litwin
Audra Francis
Bryce Usiak
Jesse Munson

Park Naturalist
Assistant Park Naturalist
Assistant Park Naturalist
Assistant Park Naturalist
Assistant Park Naturalist
Assistant Park Naturalist

Parks, Land Preservation and Pathways

Larry Bobb
Traverse Fuller
Josh Cannon
Dan Inman
Tom Baker
Troy Goodwin
Grant Rhodes
Angela Pontius
Makenna Ott

Parks, Land Preservation & Pathways Maintenance Lead
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Recreation Intern & Seasonal Maintenance Worker
Recreation Intern
Park Ranger

Derm Clarkin
Andrew Yeomans-Stephenson
Ethan Stone

Seasonal Maintenance Worker
Seasonal Maintenance Worker
Seasonal Maintenance 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 2022, there were 18,540 calls for service (excluding traffic stops 3,340).

2022 Written Reports	
Alarms	482
Traffic Crashes	818
All Other	4,226
Total	5,526

Yearly Comparisons

Written Reports

2019	2020	2021	2022
6,421	4,963	5,008	5,526

Calls for Service

2019	2020	2021	2022
18,552	16,228	17,211	18,540

Arrests

2019	2020	2021	2022
563	402	554	503

Citations

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Citations Issued	2,096	1,517	1,711	1,231
Total # of Charges	2,857	1,888	2,279	1,590

Traffic Safety

The Meridian Township Police Department views traffic safety as a primary focus of keeping the community safe. The Department works in conjunction with the Ingham County Road Department and the State Highway Department to address concerns related to road design. The Department takes enforcement action in areas designated as directed patrols based on review of traffic crash data, citizen complaints, and traffic problems that are created as a result of road closures. Speed monitoring instruments including a speed trailer and speed signs are used to complete traffic studies regarding speed-related safety concerns and traffic counts. The equipment is used to educate the motorists and can be deployed easily in areas identified internally or through citizen reporting. This year we completed 16 directed patrols and 9 traffic surveys.

Two of our officers provide car seat inspections for the Department. During 2022, seven (7) car seats inspections took place throughout the year, including during the Department's Halloween Open House.

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. While providing a more rapid response of team members to the scene of an accident, the sharing of resources has also provided investigators with increased experience and has reduced the financial burden on member agencies. In 2022, the Department requested the regional crash investigation team four (4) times, while providing assistance on eight (8) investigations outside of the Township.

Meridian Township Deer Involved Collision Data			
Year	Injury Involved	No Injury Involved	Total
2019	3	150	153
2020	5	157	162
2021	4	125	129
2022	2	99	101

Volunteers

Volunteers were instrumental this year during several events hosted by the Department. In June, during our Annual Awards Ceremony, a Haslett High School vocalist performed the Star-Spangled Banner. In October, one of regular volunteers greeted visitors, checked them in, and worked them into groups for tours of the Department during the Halloween Open House. Twice in December, volunteers came to assist the Department, once to help wrap presents for our Shop with a Cop event and then again to help with a party organized for the children displaced by the Knob Hill fire.

The Department is continuously 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.

Annually on the first Tuesday of August the Department engages the community through a nationwide event know as National Night Out (NNO). The event is intended to strengthen relationships between the community and law enforcement to take a stand against crime. During 2022, more than 25 NNO events were attended by members of the Department. Officers had the opportunity to speak with residents and share information, play games with children, and enjoy some casual conversations.

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, communities thrive. The Department was able to engage in several small activities over the course of the 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 2022, 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 388.75 hours of monthly maintenance training, as well as, certifying nationally through the National Association of Professional Canine Handlers (NAPCH) at the yearly seminar.



2022 Canine Team Activity Numbers	
Calls Handled By Meridian's Canine Team	20
Calls Handled By Other Departments	9
Call Outs To Other Departments	15
Total Calls For Service	44
Activity Type	
Ingham Regional SRT	0
Article Search	8
Area Search	0
Building Search	1
Narcotics Search	10
School Sweeps (OHS/HHS/ELHS)	4
Tracking	23
Demonstrations	2
Other Use	0
Total	48

*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 528 hours of regular monthly training and 224 hours of annual training. This totals 752 hours of yearly training. IRSRT had twenty-two activations in 2022.

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.

The officers participated in "No Senior with Christmas" event. This is a Tri-County TRIAD program which led to 450 holiday baskets distributed to tri-county elderly residents. Meridian Township residents received 26 of the baskets.

Meridian Township Police Department held the annual "Shop with a Cop" event in December of 2022. The officers worked with school counselors and twelve (12) area students participated. The officers worked in conjunction with Walmart, Jets Pizza in Haslett, and the Haslett Okemos Rotary Foundation.

Investigations Unit

The Investigations Unit is overseen by the Services Division Commander. Sergeant Ed Besonen handles the day-to-day operations of the unit and ensures each investigation is handled efficiently and with great care. In 2022, one sergeant and three officers were assigned to the unit.

Criminal complaints are handled at the road patrol level but sometimes require additional attention from a specialized investigator. These complaints are assigned to our Investigations Unit if it is determined the crime is complex or will require a more time consuming and thorough investigation. Investigators work closely with victims, officers, other law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and the Township Attorney to ensure a thorough and fair investigation is complete.

Crimes commonly assigned to the Investigations Unit include but are not limited to homicides, sexual assaults, robberies, child abuse, home invasions, frauds, larcenies, and death investigations. The investigations unit assigned a total of 171 complaints in 2022.

Complaints Assigned Per Year	
2019	504
2020	351
2021	279
2022	171

Court Services

Our Court Services Officer (CSO) acts as a liaison between the police department, the Ingham County Prosecutors Office, the Township Attorney, and the court system. The CSO tracks and processes criminal complaints and submits them to the appropriate attorney's office for review of warrant request and juvenile petitions. The CSO is also responsible for the registration and address verification of sex offenders in Meridian Township.

Court Services	2019	2020	2021	2022
Subpoenas Served	692	729	328	461
Personal Protection Orders	41	43	40	40
Warrant Requests	614	581	787	809
Warrants Signed by CSO	378	362	251	339
Twp. Attorney Requests	144	113	93	122
Total Petition Requests	102	39	50	107
Retail Fraud Requests	234	190	145	145
OWI Requests	62	61	69	55
Assault Requests	42	47	127	73
Assault Requests-Domestic	180	151	138	142
Larceny/Fraud Requests	82	70	48	63
Narcotics Requests	20	10	16	19

Records Unit

The Records Unit supervisor oversees the day-to-day activities of the Records Unit. The Records Unit consists of a supervisor, two full-time technicians, and a part-time technician. They provide support to the Uniform Division as well as the Investigations Unit by preparing criminal reports for prosecution and reporting crime statistics to state agencies. They also maintain databases for statistical reports which are provided to department staff, the Township Manager, the Township Board, and is made available to the public.

Records personnel also process all police reports, crash reports, traffic citations, and other related documents. Customer service is an emphasis of our Records Unit. Records personnel assist the public by responding to FOIA requests, processing insurance requests for reports, processing pistol purchase licenses, and answering incoming phone calls.

Annual Crime Reporting Summary	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2021-2022
Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter	1	1	0	1	100%
Rape and Attempted Rape	70	51	62	36	-42%
Robbery	12	12	10	17	70%
Aggravated Assault	37	39	35	35	0%
Total Part 1 Violent Crime	120	103	107	89	-17%
Burglary	96	88	64	69	8%
Larceny	935	749	611	467	-23%
Vehicle Theft	52	44	56	75	34%
Arson	4	0	6	0	-600%
Total Part 1 Property Crime	1,106	881	737	611	-17%
Total Part 1 Offenses	1,220	984	844	700	-17%
OWI Arrests (Liquor or Drugs)	63	53	69	48	-30%
Traffic Accident – Roadway	847	588	785	818	4%

Accreditation

Accreditation is an on-going program that encourages law enforcement agencies to improve performance and service to the community. It is the voluntary adoption of the best practices in law enforcement and requires constant evaluation of the professional objectives set forth by an independent body of professionals in the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (MLEAC). Accreditation status acknowledges the implementation of conceptually sound written directives, policies, procedures, and training.

In February 2020, the Department became the first police agency in mid-Michigan to gain full accreditation status from the MLEAC and the 19th overall in the state of Michigan. Today, there are 53 accredited agencies in the state and another 65 agencies are in the process.

In December of 2022, the MLEAC sent a pair of assessors to the Department for our triennial assessment. Through the hard work of our accreditation team, we were notified that we had passed our assessment and would achieve accredited status for an additional three years.

Mid-Michigan Police Academy

The Services Division Commander represents the Department and acts as a coordinator for the Mid-Michigan Police Academy which is hosted by the Lansing Community College (LCC). Coordinators work closely with recruits during the 17-week academy, giving our coordinator an opportunity to identify possible candidates for employment. This also allows the coordinator to monitor each recruit's progress and assist in career development. Because of our involvement in the police academy, the Department can have an active role in shaping the future of law enforcement in the state of Michigan. Three Department officers also teach various classes at the academy. The Department earns LCC credit hours for the time spent coordinating and teaching at the police academy. These credit hours can be used to send officers to training at LCC.

In 2022, the Department sponsored six recruits through the police academy, one during the spring session and five during the fall session. We also recruited and hired an additional recruit attending the spring session. The recruits from the spring session have completed their training and are solo-performing patrol officers. The recruits from the fall academy are in field training.

Training

Under the direction of the Chief of Police, the Training Sergeant oversees all training for the Department. The Department provided employees with 3,125 hours of training in 2022. It included some of the following:

- In-Service: 1,176 hours (this includes cultural competency, de-escalation training, mental health/PRT training)
- External: 1,468.50 hours
- Firearms: 347 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.

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. The department had 8 people participate this year. We received great feedback and look forward to holding it again next year.

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 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Property Room Report

The Quartermaster maintains the property room. Activity involving the property room in 2022 included:

- 1,738 items entered as evidence
- 120.5 pounds of narcotics incinerated from the Prescription Drug Drop Off Box
- 344 abandoned vehicles were processed

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 2022, a total of 157 surveys were returned. The 15% response rate was decreased as compared to 2021.

Citizen Satisfaction Survey for Sworn Personnel

Category	Rating of Excellent/Good
Helpfulness	94%
Friendliness	96%
Knowledge	96%
Quality of Service	95%
Professional Conduct	96%
Response Time	94%

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

Category	Rating of Excellent/Good
Helpfulness	65%
Friendliness	67%
Knowledge	66%
Quality of Service	66%
Professional Conduct	67%

**Not all questions generated a response.*

2022 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.

Fill all vacant positions while simultaneously working toward creating a diverse and inclusive workforce.

- Officer Danny Mora, Officer Jacob Gonzles, Officer Natalie Tyndall, Officer Brent Spence and Officer Sarah Hubbard graduated from the Mid-Michigan Police Academy in December and are currently in Field Training.
- Officer Isabela Acker and Officer Jack Akers graduated from the Mid-Michigan Police Academy in May. Both have completed their field training and are solo performing officers assigned to the uniform division.

Leverage suggestions made by the Recruitment and Retention Committee to provide an environment more likely to retain employees while attracting potential employees.

- External vest carriers have been acquired thanks to a gift from a private donor. Feedback from officers has been extremely positive.
- Currently reviewing ideas to update the public safety building to improve its appearance and function.
- Change was made to appearance standards to allow female officers to wear their hair in a ponytail or other manner that still meets a professional appearance.

Work to improve transparency of the Department's actions through use of the website, social media, and community meetings.

- Creation of Social Media Committee.
- Significantly increased the number of posts to share actions of department and engage community.
- Continued review and updates to websites transparency page.
- Continue quarterly Neighborhood Leaders Meetings to share and receive information from our partners in the community.
- Participate in the monthly meeting of Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust (ALPACT) to maintain a dialog between our regional community and the police department.

Prepare for the 2022 MLEAC re-accreditation assessment.

- The Department had an on-site inspection for re-accreditation in December of 2022. Every three years accredited agencies are inspected by assessors to ensure compliance with the over 100 standards set by the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (MLEAC). Our agency will be Re-Accredited in February of 2023 after a Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission review of our assessment.

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

- Continue to provide training to supervisors through Michigan State University School of Staff and Command and First Line Supervisor courses.
- Provide officers and Sergeants with other task specific leadership training to better prepare them for promotions.

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

- Two Sergeants and six officers participated in removing 200 deer from herds that affect high accident locations.
- Accidents involving deer reduced from 129 in 2021 to 101 in 2022.

Provide leadership in the law enforcement community through involvement in collaborative professional law enforcement training.

- Partnered with area law enforcement agencies to develop a critical skills training. Meridian Township Police Department provides instructors to countywide training for officers in decision-making process.
- Involvement in Michigan State University School of Staff and Command and First Line Supervisor schools as class facilitators and receiving free training for our officers in these classes.
- Involvement in countywide use of force instructor development course, to provide additional training to our use of force instructors.
- Early discussion regarding a large-scale AVI training in October involving law enforcement, fire, EMS, schools, tow companies, and many others. The intent of the training will be to bring the full scope of an AVI situation to light from many perspectives, identifying any area that needs to be improved.

WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP POLICE SERVICES

The Meridian Township Police Department provides law enforcement services to Williamstown Township. The 2022-2024 contract arranges for Williamstown Township to compensate Meridian Township \$141,802.00 for calendar year 2022 and \$67.65 per hour outside of the 40 hours of weekly patrol for emergency and non-emergency responses.

Williamstown Township Statistics				
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Written Reports	323	285	280	251
Calls for Service	1,451	1,304	1,506	1,279
Calls for Service (excluding traffic stops)	1,038	1,043	1,143	1,063
Arrests	17	8	12	15
Citations Issued	170	115	95	46
Total Number of Charges	204	132	111	56

Written Reports				
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Alarms	52	31	29	23
Traffic Crashes	107	102	105	101
All Other	164	152	146	127

Total	323	285	280	251
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MTPD TEAM MEMBERS

CHIEF

Ken Plaga

CAPTAIN

Richard Grillo

LIEUTENANT

Bart Crane

SERGEANTS

Edward Besonen
Curt Squires
Andrew McCready
Andrew Tobias

Chris Lofton
Jason Clements
Brian Canen

OFFICERS BY SENIORITY

Christina Scaccia
Jeff Adams
Kyle Royston
Rebecca Payne
Bryan LeRoy
Doug Strouse
Aaron McConaughy
Dan King
Adam Slavick
Ian Mandernack
Kolby Casaday
Megan Klein
Austin Dietz

Blaine Anderson
Lorenzo Velasquez
Antonio Trevino
David Reinke
David Reinke
Megan Heinemann
Meghan Cole
Maggie Cole
Bryant Martin
Isabela Acker
Jack Akers
Stacey Bazan
Danny Mora
Jacob Gonzales
Natalie Tyndall
Brent Spence
Sarah Hubbard

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Kristi Schaeding, Administrative Assistant
Heidi LaFargue, Records Supervisor
Lori Hagan, Records Technician

Alycia Boik, Records Technician
Jennifer Ramsey, Records Technician

CADETS

Baylie Kaiser
Mariah Keener
Elizabeth Noechel
Cassidy Forbes
Kelly Hintze
Demia Finley
Kayla Frank

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.

2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Township's Work on the Daniels Drain Assessment Roll in Accordance with the Michigan Drain Code

After 19 public meetings were held since 2015, the Township finalized the Daniels Drain Drainage Project Special Assessment Roll on May 3, 2022 with the Board's adoption. We conducted about 80 one-on-one meetings with residents, responded to hundreds of phone calls and emails, mailed notices for both drafts of the assessment roll in accordance with Public Act 188.

Township staff also mailed a letter voluntarily to all property owners in the Daniels Drain district prior to the final assessment roll going before the Township Board. This voluntary letter detailed how each property owners' assessment changed in terms of dollar value and percentage increase or decrease over the course of the assessment roll process. The letter also provided the average assessment for commercial properties, single-family homes, and multi-family units. Lastly, it details the entire history and special process from 2015-2022 and why the assessment roll changed.

We received and completed a FOIA request for all eight years of documents and communications regarding the Daniels Drain. We received one appeal of the Daniels Drain Drainage Project Special Assessment Roll, litigation is ongoing.

Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Daniels Drain Construction

Worked diligently to update the community regarding the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Daniels Drain construction project. In total, the Township published 21 updates throughout the year on our website and social media accounts. All of these updates also went out on the Township's social media accounts. We could not find any updates on the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's website. The Township's updates were also shared with the relevant neighborhood associations throughout the course of the year. Deputy Manager Opsommer also provided our Police and Fire Departments with daily updates on where the construction pinch points would be for emergency response purposes.

Some remaining restoration work will be completed by the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's contractor in the spring of 2023. Township staff made sure several construction items were corrected over the course of the project, including sanitary manholes, ditch restoration work along Dobie Rd, and the pathway railing along Grand River Ave.

The Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office contacted the Township in late July and informed us that repaving of the northern 400 feet of Northview Dr was not included in the drain project. This 400' section begins at the southern curb cut to the Ponds Cooperative and ends at Grand River Ave.

The Township does not want to leave this 400' section of asphalt in poor condition. We worked with the Drain Office and their contractor to get pricing that matches our 2022 local road program contracts and permitted them to mill and repave the north section of Northview Dr as part of the drain project, which will be funded by the Township's local road millage.

Upon taking core samples, some soil work will be required before this section of Northview Dr can be milled and paved. Therefore, this portion of Northview Dr will be completed in the spring of 2023. Asphalt plants open around May 15, so the work should begin in mid-May to early June.

Township Examining Pros and Cons of Converting Chapter 20 Drains

The Township held two meetings with the Ingham County Drain Commission's Office regarding converting our Chapter 20 drains to Chapter 3, 4 or 8 drains. Township staff are currently having internal discussions about the pros and cons of converting our Chapter 20 drains.

It is clear that the Board would lose any and all authority to petition, or not petition, drain improvements for Chapter 20 drains if we convert them. Meaning the Township would no longer be able to prevent drain improvements it deems as unnecessary. If the Board converts the Chapter 20 drains, this authority would be solely held by the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office.

We are working to determine what controls we would have over the Chapter 20 drains moving forward, outside of choosing to petition or not petition the improvements, if we were to keep them as Chapter 20 drains.

Township Staff Coordinated Powell Road Paving Repairs at No Cost to Taxpayers

The southern portion of Powell Rd was paved by Mayberry Homes as a condition of approval for the construction of Silverstone Estates. This small section of Powell Rd failed due to insufficient peat/muck removal by the contractor. Peat was removed at a depth of about 17 feet below grade here. After many meetings, Township staff were able to get the developer's contractor to pay for the repairs. The repairs began on October 24 and were completed on October 28.

Water Main Break at Haslett and Park Lake

One of the worst water main breaks the Township has ever experienced occurred on June 23 at 10:03 a.m. The water main break was caused by the Ingham County Road Department's contractor.

This is a 24-inch water main that is a main distributor of water to our customers from the ELMWSA plant.

When reports first began coming in, we immediately activated our crews and our emergency contractor. We were able to restore water to all customers in 23 minutes by closing the valves to the north and south of the main break in concert with the East Lansing Meridian Water & Sewer Authority (ELMWSA).

We then worked with ELMWSA to determine which zones of the Township were impacted and produced a map to communicate this information and issue the boil water advisory by 12:26 p.m.

We then answered hundreds of phone calls and emails to address any and all concerns that residents had regarding the water main break. The boil water advisory was lifted on June 25 at 5:30 p.m. after

both rounds of testing came back negative for microbial contamination.

Emergency repairs were completed on the water main by Friday at 7 a.m. (less than 24 hours). We poured concrete at the 45 degree turn in our water main to act as a new thrust block and prevent another contractor from removing the thrust block in the future. Our system functions perfectly fine with this section of water main isolated and out of service. Therefore, we gave the concrete the full weekend to cure before putting this section of water main back into service on June 27.

Increasing Everbridge Emergency Alert Subscribers

We have been working diligently to increase the number of residents who subscribe to the Township's emergency alert system, Everbridge, by adding this information to our water bills, putting it in the red banner at the top of the Township's website on a regular basis, disseminating information on social media, in email newsletters and other platforms. We had 7,300 subscribers in June 2022. We now have 8,403 subscribers as of December 2022, a 15% increase in just 6 months.

Knob Hill Fire Relief Efforts

Thanks to the generous support of so many, we were able to purchase or supply toiletry and hygiene items, gifts for children, clothing, some kitchen supplies, duffel bags, suitcases, and air mattresses for every family. Through all of the monetary donations, we were able to raise a total of \$120,107.76 through Meridian Cares.

After purchasing some of the above-mentioned items, we were left with a fund balance of \$115,638.04. This amount was then distributed evenly across all 31 occupied units, allowing us to make a donation in the amount of \$3,730.26 to all 31 families. Each family also received about \$130 in gift cards, for a total value of \$3,860.26 per family.

Enhance the Town Hall Room Audio and Visual Equipment to Improve Meeting Room Capabilities and Better Serve Multimedia Usage

The installation of new monitors, TVs and audio/video equipment in the Town Hall room is nearly complete. Additional wiring and synchronization equipment will be installed later in early 2023.

Upon completion, the dais and staff table will be equipped with 22-inch monitors for board and commission members to use during public meetings. We will also be installing four televisions mounted overhead in the center of the Town Hall Room. There will also be a television installed on the wall on each side of the dais.

Meridian Township to Pay Off Central Fire Station in 2025, Over 3 Years Early

In 2012, Meridian Township voters approved a 15-year .2 mill levy to finance the construction of the new Central Fire Station. In 2013, the final bond payment was slated for 2028. Due to higher than expected revenue, Township officials have announced plans to pay off the debt three years early in 2025. This accelerated payoff will save taxpayers over \$822,000 in principal and interest costs.

We are pleased to be in a position to pay off our debt early and save our taxpayers an additional three years of bond payments. Over the past few years, we have increased the number of paramedics on staff, purchased new ambulances and fire trucks and built a new fire station. The Township Board is fully committed to providing our firefighter/paramedics the necessary equipment to provide exemplary customer care.

We received very good media coverage on this effort in the LSJ.

The Central Fire Station was constructed in 2016.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Bill McConnell, Chair
Kendra Grasseeschi, Vice-Chair
William McConnell
J. James Kielbaso
Courtney Wisinski, Township Board Liaison

John Sarver
Luca Wisinski, Student
James E. Jackson
Tom Frazier
Anna Colby

TEAM MEMBERS

Administration

Dan Opsommer

Deputy Township Manager
Director of Public Works & Engineering
Administrative Assistant II

Denise Green

Engineering

Younes Ishraidi, P.E., C.F.M.
Nyal Nunn, C.F.M.
Jay Graham
Michael Love
Tom Westerfield

Chief Engineer
Senior Project Engineer
Records Manager
Engineering Technician
Engineering Technician

Geographic Information Systems

Cara Maney

GIS Specialist

Environmental Programs

LeRoy Harvey

Environmental Programs Coordinator (PT)

Public Works Superintendent

Rob MacKenzie

Water Utility

Robert Stacy
Mike Ellis
David Lester
Dan Palacios
D'Destin Kaufmann
Derrick Bobb
Ben McCann
James Arnett

Lead Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker

Sewer Utility

Jacob Flannery
Kyle Fogg
Don Cuson
David Borowicz

Lead Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker
Utility Worker

Buildings, Grounds and Cemetery

Tyler Kennell
Keith Hewitt

Lead Utility Worker
Utility Worker

Motor Pool

Todd Frank

Lead Mechanic

TREASURER'S OFFICE

For most of 2022, the Meridian Township Treasurer's Office resumed normal operations as we came out of the of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, in 2022, the Treasurer's Office provided our 44,000 residents with access to many services without having to set foot in our buildings.

In 2022, The Treasurer's Office:

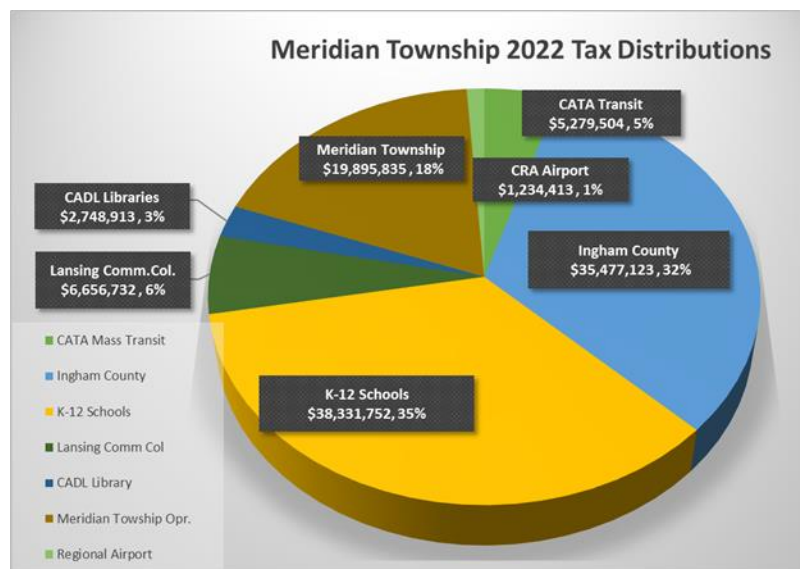
- Mailed out 28,890 summer and winter tax bills, and 861 special assessment bills.
- Delivered approximately 20,000 in personal transactions annually at the counter.
- Answered approximately 35,000 customer service phone calls for taxes and utility billing.
- Mailed, or emailed, approximately 3,000 receipts or duplicate tax bills.
- Provided extensive financial reporting to the Board, auditors, and other taxing authorities.
- Provided the Township with over \$780,000 in earnings from investments.

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

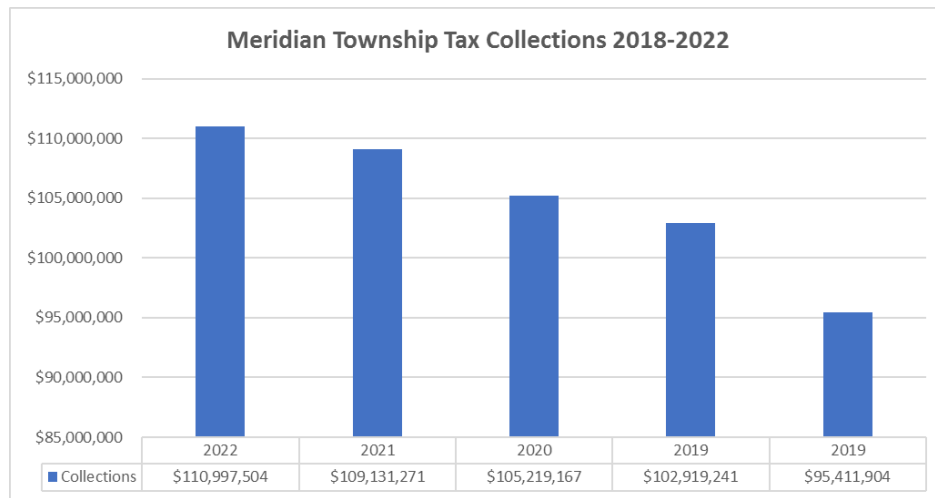
During the calendar year 2022, the Treasurer's Office reported:

Total property taxes collected and processed in 2022 were \$110,997,504. This is up \$1,866,233, or 1.7% from the \$109,131,271 collected in 2021. In 2020, we collected \$105,219,167, \$102,919,241 was collected in 2019, and \$95,411,904 was collected in 2018.

The Treasurer is required to pay out collected funds to local school districts. In Meridiand Township, these include the Okemos School District, Haslett School District, East Lansing School District, Williamston School District, and the Ingham Intermediate Schools. Other governmental units receive tax money from Meridian Township according to each taxing authority's millage. 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 18% of the tax collection in 2022.



Non-tax receipts in 2022 totaled \$31,058,720. These include federal grants, revenue sharing from the State of Michigan, along with other permits, and fees. In 2021, \$20,869,800 was collected in non-tax receipts. The large increase this year was due to the one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants received from the federal government.



- At the end of 2022, the Treasurer’s Office managed \$41,884,380 in fixed and non-fixed investments. Investment income for 2022 increased significantly in 2022 to \$781,213 more the doubling the \$318,515 in earnings in 2021, from all investments.
- Total delinquent personal property taxes collected in 2022 was \$50,637. Down from \$95,808 collected in 2021 and up from \$38,216 collected in 2020. At the end of 2022, there were \$75,075 in delinquent personal property taxes owed to Meridian Township.
- There were no new bankruptcies/receiverships filed by businesses in Meridian Township in 2022. Currently there are 13 delinquent taxpayers going through bankruptcies.
- Throughout 2022 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.
- 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 2022, 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 documentation for the annual audit.
 - 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) 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