

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2022 **-APPROVED-**  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room  
TUESDAY, February 07, 2023 **6:00 pm**

PRESENT: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Wisinski

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Fire Chief Hamel, Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt, IT Director Gebes, Communications Manager Diehl, Director of Operations Massie, Finance Director Garber, Deputy Clerk Lemaster, Police Captain Grillo

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Jackson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLLCALL

Deputy Clerk Lemaster called the roll of the Board. All board members are present.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Introduction of Penelope Tsernoglou, State Representative, 75<sup>th</sup> House District

Trustee Wilson introduced State Representative Penelope Tsernoglou to the board.

Representative Tsernoglou spoke about her work for the working class, families, and seniors. She is chairing the Election Committee, and is on the Judiciary Committee, the Criminal Justice committee, and the Housing Sub-Committee. She spoke about changes to elections through proposition two passed in November 2022, and spoke about helping the community through policy and budgetary assistance.

B. Introduction of Simar Pawar, Ingham County Commissioner

Clerk Guthrie Introduced County Commissioner Pawar to the board and spoke to Commissioner Pawar's work in the township.

Commissioner Pawar introduced herself to the board and stated she has been a resident of Meridian Township for 30+ years. She spoke of her family and professional background. She spoke about her new responsibilities as a County Commissioner and how seriously she takes this responsibility.

C. Introduction of new HOMTV Interns

Manager Diehl introduced the interns working with HOMTV including Dominic Carroll, Mackenzie Dekker, Taeya Wright, and Rachel Pierson.

D. Climate Sustainability Plan-Environmental Commission

Environmental Commissioner McConnell gave a presentation on Climate Sustainability in the township. He spoke about taxes in the township and how those taxes pay for the great services the township provides. He asked the board for feedback on the draft revision of the energy section of the Climate Sustainability Plan. He presented information on current renewable energy, and energy efficiency in the township. He noted significant progress in reaching 100% renewable energy in the township, 33% reduction in greenhouse emissions in the Township Municipal Building, and 27% reduction of emissions in the Public Safety Building. He also spoke about the Department on Energy funded center at Michigan State University that is further assessing township buildings for further potential increases in energy efficiency.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Jackson opened public comment at 6:23 PM.

Jaime Guarmo, 400 S. Woodward Ave., Birmingham spoke in support of recreational marijuana.

Supervisor Jackson closed public comment at 6:25 PM.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported the 2022 Annual Report is completed. The Okemos bridge project is moving forward and should be completed in 2-3 weeks. He spoke about the building improvements that will be taking place soon including wallpaper and carpets. The facility will be closed for about 5 months this year as renovations begin. The new municipal signs will be installed in two to three weeks. Phase I of the Lake Lansing to MSU pathway is underway. The township audit will be taking place soon. Police and Fire wages are being addressed. The Senior Center Task Force will have its first meeting February 14<sup>th</sup>. An additional paramedic crew has been stationed in the south part of the township to address medical responses to Alameda Township. The Public Safety building is getting its new locker soon, and a new K-9 unit will be added to the force. The future of the former farmer market will be addressed soon. At 6:00 pm on March 7<sup>th</sup> there will be a meeting of residents, the developers of the Village of Okemos project and the board. The deer cull program for 2022-2023 is complete. He addressed the township's response to a hoax call that took place this morning at Okemos High School. He thanked the board for their decision to increase staff in the area as it allowed a better response.

Supervisor Jackson asked Captain Grillo about the police accreditation.

Captain Grillo replied the Meridian Township Police Department has been reaccredited.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Treasurer Deschaine

- Attended February 6<sup>th</sup> Pension Board meeting and reported the Meridian Township pension plan is 100% funded, he noted the Pension Board needs more members
- Attended February 2<sup>nd</sup> Economic Development Corporation meeting
- Attended Chinese New Year Event at Meridian Mall
- Attended Capital Area Treasurer's Association meeting where discussions were had on reforming disabled veterans property tax exemptions
- Spoke about the press conference covering the Okemos High School hoax call where emergency responders acted efficiently and appropriately

#### Trustee Hendrickson

- Spoke about the hoax call to Okemos High School and encouraged law makers to take action to make schools a safer place

#### Trustee Wisinski

- The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has been working internally on processes and procedures and is now moving forward into public facing actions including Meridian Township's first pride celebration at the end of August 2023
- Thanked the Environmental Commission for their work and presentation of their Climate Sustainability Plan
- Spoke about the hoax call to Okemos High School and noted the law enforcement presence at the school including Meridian Township Police, FBI, ATF, and neighboring communities first responders, and noted busses from Lansing arrived to relocate school children to 2/42 church

#### Clerk Guthrie

- Thanked emergency services, Manager Walsh, and 2/42 church for their responses to the hoax call to Okemos High School
- Contacted State Representative Julie Brixie about gun safety
- Spoke with State Representative Julie Brixie about speaking at the first Meridian Pride Event
- Attended February 6<sup>th</sup> Pension Board Meeting
- Attended Capital Area of Municipal Clerks meeting covering proposition two
- Attended Cannabis Regulatory Agency and Municipal Summit
- The audit for the November 2022 election took place
- Valley Wings on Jolly Rd. in Okemos has opened for business
- Township Offices will be closed on February 20<sup>th</sup> in observance of Presidents Day
- Thursday February 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am new firefighters will be sworn in

#### Trustee Sundland

- Attended February 2<sup>nd</sup> Economic Development Corporation meeting where there were talks on a "small business" recognition and promotional program
- March is Women in Business month

#### Supervisor Jackson

- Attended February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting with Ingham County Road Department and staff
- Attended February 2<sup>nd</sup> neighborhood leaders program, led by Captain Grillo

- Attended Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion taskforce meeting
- Attended February 6<sup>th</sup> Downtown Development Authority meeting where a quorum was not present

8. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Jackson reviewed the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Wilson asked about the significant increase in earnings as shown in the Treasurer's quarterly report.

Treasurer Deschaine replied there was a large increase in earnings because the Federal Reserve has increased interest rates, some Township reserve funds have been moved from liquid investments to fixed investments, and the continuing excellent financial shape of the township. He thanked manager Walsh for his help with realizing these returns.

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with one Amendment to the minutes. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

A. Communications

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Minutes- January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Regular Township Board Minutes

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. Bills

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows: Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

<b>Common Cash</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>658,360.23</b>
<b>Public Works</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>437,849.70</b>
<b>Trust &amp; Agency</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>7,013.41</u></b>
<b>Total Checks</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,103,223.34</b>
<b>Credit Card Transactions 01/18/23 to 02/01/2023</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>9,506.62</b>
<b>Total Purchases</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>1,112,729.96</u></b>
<b>ACH Payments</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>660,217.64</u></b>

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

D. Planning Commission Annual Report

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the 2022 Planning Commission Annual Report. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

E. Ratification of New Full-Time EMT/Firefighter Appointments

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to authorize the Fire Department to appoint Zachary Silver and Andrew Cummins to Full-Time EMT/Firefighter. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

F. Charitable Gaming License-The You've Got this Project

**Trustee Hendrickson moved approval of a request from the "You've Got This" project of Meridian Township, Ingham County, asking that they be recognized as a non-profit Organization operating in the community for the purposes of obtaining a Gaming License for approval, and further that the Township Clerk be authorized to execute the resolution from the State of Michigan. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

G. Set a Public Hearing for Haslett Village Square Commercial Rehabilitation Act-February 21, 2023

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to set the public hearing for the Haslett Village Square Commercial Rehabilitation Exemption Application from SP Holding, LLC to February 21, 2023. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

H. Treasurer's Investment Report-4th Quarter 2022

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the Treasurer's Investment Report from the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2022. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY-NONE

11. HEARINGS-NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Set a Date for Study Session-February 28, 2023

Supervisor Jackson outlined setting a date for Study Session.

**Trustee Wilson moved to approve a township board study session on February 28, 2023 at 6:00pm at the Township Municipal Building in the Town Hall Room. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.**

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item as it will allow the board time to discuss the Sign Ordinance.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Resolution Commemorating Black History Month

Supervisor Jackson outlined the resolution commemorating Black History Month.

**Clerk Guthrie moved to approve the resolution commemorating Black History Month. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.**

**Clerk Guthrie offered an amendment by adding Milton Scales's and Supervisor Jackson's years of service on the Planning Commission to the resolution. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Manager Walsh noted Mr. Scales served on the Planning Commission in 2012.

Clerk Guthrie read the resolution honoring Black History Month.

**Supervisor Jackson called for a voice vote on the resolution commemorating Black History Month as amended.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. Board and Commission Appointments

Supervisor Jackson outlined the Board and Commission Appointments.

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the appointment of Graham Diedrich to the Environmental Commission for a term ending 12/31/2025. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of this item.

Trustee Wisinski spoke in support of this item.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

**Trustee Wilson moved that Phyllis Vaughn be appointed as representative to the CATA Board of Directors to fill a vacancy for the term ending September 20, 2025. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.**

Trustee Wilson spoke in support of this item.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of this item.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Ordinance 2023-01 – Rezone 1642 Lake Court – RB to RCC, with a Conditional Rezoning Agreement

Director Schmitt outline Ordinance 2023-01, Rezoning 1642 Lake Court RB to RCC with a conditional Rezoning Agreement. He noted staff has no major concerns with this item.

Trustee Wilson noted the address is 1642 and asked where that is located.

Director Schmitt replied 1642 will be the new address for the parcel, and currently does not exist outside of township records.

Treasurer Deschaine asked if there has been any feedback on the project from the neighbors.

Director Schmitt replied neighbors are happy to see this development.

Treasurer Deschaine asked who the target market for this development is for and what the cost of rent will be.

Applicant Dominic Lee, 2419 Science Parkway, replied the units are to be rented at the market rate, currently between 1600-2200. The target market is an older population and younger professionals.

Applicant Scott Wheaton, 2419 Science Parkway, explained he sees the target market as a wide array of people as this an exciting part of the township with public transportation easily accessible.

Trustee Hendrickson stated this is not an objectionable rezoning. He explained this will remove a blighted building and replace it with a new development.

Trustee Wisinski asked if 12 units means 6 duplexes.

Mr. Wheaton replied that is correct.

Clerk Guthrie asked Director Schmitt about potential issues with meeting setback requirements and the potential of moving this forward as a Planned Unit Development.

Director Schmitt replied township engineers are still working what development path the applicants will have to take, but the applicants will have to meet the ordinance requirements either way.

Clerk Guthrie asked if there will be any changes to Lake Ct.

Director Schmitt replied the Ingham County Road Department will have to make that decision.

Supervisor Jackson asked if the address will be Lake Ct. or Lake Lansing.

Director Schmitt replied there will likely be 6 Lake Ct. addresses and 6 Lake Lansing Rd. addresses.

Trustee Wilson asked if the exit on to Lake Lansing Rd. will be accomplished with one curb cut.

Director Schmitt replied that direction will come from the Ingham County Road Department.

Supervisor Jackson stated this item should come back to the board.

## B. Recreational Marijuana Ordinances

Director Schmitt outlined the Recreational Marijuana Ordinance. He noted the overlays at Towner Rd. and Dawn Ave. were removed. Two of the other overlays were reduced as they contained residential developments and new businesses. Staff and Planning Commission recommended prohibition of drive through services and a 2000 ft. buffer from any other licensed premise.

Township Attorney Kuschel further outlined Recreational Marijuana Ordinance. He mentioned a definition section has been added to the ordinance. He noted there is no language on license transfers at this time, and permits will be issued on an annual basis. He noted the board will decide how the Community Planning and Development Department will handle permit applications. The board will also decide the criteria in the applicant decision process. A public hearing should be held during competitive review of permits. Appeal provisions will be included in the Ordinance. Renewal of applications will be possible should the applicant show consistent service. If the board wants to see every renewal application it can be done. There will be commercial sign restrictions in place. Not adhering to local ordinances can induce penalties limited to a \$500 fine.

Director Schmitt noted he is looking for feedback on several topics including transferring of licenses, the maximum number of licenses, and the possibility of allowing a grow operation. He added there is an option for Micro Business licenses.

Trustee Sundland asked if there will be a study session to discuss this item.

Supervisor Jackson replied there has not been consideration for a study session at this time.

Treasurer Deschaine stated he would like a study session to cover this topic.

Trustee Wisinski stated it's important to think about how long the board would be prolonging this ordinance.

Clerk Guthrie also would like to hold a study session to discuss this topic.

Trustee Wilson would also like to hold a study session to discuss this topic.

Trustee Hendrickson noted a study session would be helpful, but the township must remain efficient. He asked when a public hearing would take place.

Director Schmitt replied the zoning public hearing already took place.

Township Attorney Kuschel noted a second public hearing does not need to take place, but the board may hold one if desired.

Supervisor Jackson noted this could be brought back as a discussion item as many times as needed, but a study session would be useful. She stated that this should come back as a discussion item until the board has worked through this item.

Clerk Guthrie asked if the board held a study session on the first available session in March the item can come back in the form of discussion.

Manager Walsh noted this could be a discussion item on February 21<sup>st</sup> and the topic of a study session on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Trustee Hendrickson asked how allowing only one grow operation in only one overlay district would not open the township up to lawsuits.

Township Attorney Kuschel replied there is very little economic interest in grow operations and the township has the authority to set the time and place of marijuana establishments.

Trustee Hendrickson thanked staff and the Planning Commission for their work on the overlay map. He asked if overlay three could fit two establishments.

Director Schmitt replied the current applicant in overlay three is on the far eastern end of the district and another could fit in the overlay outside of the 2000 ft. buffer.

Trustee Hendrickson noted he would like to see one establishment per overlay. He asked about the board being involved in the permit renewals, or if that would be purely through administration.

Township Attorney Kuschel replied the renewal policy has not yet been made, but could go either way.

Trustee Hendrickson noted if an applicant has gone through the renewal process with staff they should not have to come to the board for review.

Trustee Hendrickson noted the current text states, "the director may grant final approval to the renewal applications with minor amendments and issue the permit" but has no such language for renewal with major amendments.

Director Schmitt replied the intent is a renewal with a major amendment would have to come back to the board, but this will be more thought out when they get to the competitive review standards.

Trustee Hendrickson asked how the competitive review process would work.

Township Attorney Kuschel explained it could be as simple as setting a number of factors to be scored on, or can be as complex as each board member going through each application individually and compiling an aggregate score. He further explained It could also be accomplished by having Director Schmitt go through an initial review of each applicant and submitting those chosen to a sub-committee who will review again and give recommendations to the Township Board who would then give final approval. He noted the board may be creative in creating this process.

Trustee Hendrickson noted regardless of the ordinance there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in the way of policies and standards.

Mr. Kuschel replied that is correct. He noted a policy document can be started and given to the board on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Treasurer Deschaine noted the reason applications haven't come in for growing operations as they are zoned as industrial, a zoning that only exists in one overlay. He stated he would like to finish the ordinance before finishing policies.

Trustee Wilson also stated she would like to see no growing operations and only one facility per overlay district. She asked about transfers of ownership being problematic.

Director Schmitt replied many of these groups take on minority partners as they evolve. The current medical ordinance restricts out of township owners from transferring inside of 30 months. He noted this is an area where he would like board feedback.

Trustee Wilson noted right now it appears as if there are no transfers.

Director Schmitt replied at this time that is correct.

Clerk Guthrie asked why there is no curbside service.

Director Schmitt replied the Planning Commission did not want to see business take place outside of the facility.

Mr. Kuschel replied this is in line with the regulation of alcohol.

Clerk Guthrie replied that she can have alcohol delivered to her house, and noted some people have physical restrictions that can make getting out of a car difficult and spoke in support of curbside service.



Mr. Kuschel noted there is no litigation on curbside service at this time to his knowledge.

Clerk Guthrie asked about emission regulation.

Director Schmitt replied tickets may be issued when there is a noticeable odor emanating from a property.

Clerk Guthrie asked why there is a difference between liquor license transfer and recreational marijuana license.

Mr. Kuschel replied this area of litigation is not settled at this time.

Clerk Guthrie asked if liquor licenses are transferred through the state.

Director Schmitt replied that is the case.

Clerk Guthrie stated she would like to see options for license transferability.

Trustee Wisinski asked if medical permit holders will be expected to apply competitively, and if are there options for those permit holders.

Mr. Kuschel replied they would have to apply competitively, but how the competitive review factors evaluate an applicant's history in the township will be left to procedures and standards.

Supervisor Jackson asked if the medical marijuana structure is going to go away.

Mr. Kuschel replied not at this time. He noted the medical market has shrunk by 25% statewide, however the caregiver provisions are still doing well.

Supervisor Jackson asked if the township could require or give advantages to businesses who hold permits for medical and recreational.

Mr. Kuschel replied he would not encourage a requirement to hold both medical and recreational licenses.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Jackson opened Public Remarks at 8:28 pm.

NONE

Supervisor Jackson closed Public Remarks at 8:28 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS-NONE

Supervisor Jackson and Clerk Guthrie thanked the Environmental Commission for their work on the climate sustainability plan.

16. CLOSED SESSION

**Treasurer Deschaine moved to go into a closed session for collective bargaining/union negotiations under MCL 15.268(1)(c). Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson, Wisinski, Supervisor Jackson,

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

**At 8:31 pm the board entered into a closed session.**

**At 9:00 pm the board returned to an open session.**

17. ADJOURNMENT

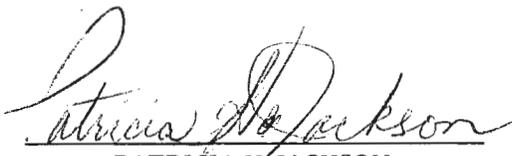
**Trustee Hendrickson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.**

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.**

  
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PATRICIA H. JACKSON,  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

  
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DEBORAH GUTHRIE  
TOWNSHIP CLERK