

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD 2023 -**APPROVED**-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198 517.853.4000,
Township Hall Room
TUESDAY, August 1st, 2023, 6:00 pm

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Director of Public Works and Deputy Township Manager Opsommer, Community Planning and Development Director Schmitt, IT Director Gebes, Communications Manager Diehl, Chief of Police Plaga, Fire Chief Hamel, Human Resource Director Tithof, Deputy Clerk Emily Gordon, Admin Assistant to the Clerk Spurlock

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
Supervisor Jackson called the August 1st, 2023 regular Township Board meeting to order at 6:01pm.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS
Supervisor Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. ROLL CALL
Administrative Assistant to the Clerk Spurlock called the roll of the Board. All board members present.
4. PRESENTATION
Clerk Guthrie introduced the new Deputy Clerk Emily Gordon
5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS
NONE
6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT
Township Manager Walsh spoke on
 - Renovation updates
 - Police and Township Building Improvements
 - Park and Recreation and Police Chief Director updates
 - Budget Update
 - Rotary Hero Luncheon
 - DEI Training
 - Updates to job descriptions
7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - Trustee Wilson spoke on a Kiwanis donation
 - Treasurer Deschaine spoke on National Night Out, a meeting/tour at the East Lansing Water Plant, CATA Board Meeting
 - Clerk Guthrie spoke on Prop 2 new ballot drop boxes.

Supervisor Jackson inquired if all the drop boxes are inside.

Clerk Guthrie stated that only the drop box at Township Hall will be indoors.

8. APPROVAL OF 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. CONCENT AGENDA

Supervisor Jackson reviewed the Consent Agenda

Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the consent agenda with friendly amendments. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie.

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. Municipal Employees' Retirement System (MERS) Defined Contribution Administration

Human Resource Director Tithof outlined the new retirement plan details for the board.

Trustee Wilson inquired if there was an urgency to making this change, and why.

Director Tithof stated that yes, there is, because this has become a hindrance and dangerous situation for employees for multiple reasons.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke on this topic.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke on this topic.

Trustee Sundland spoke on this topic.

Trustee Wisinski inquired about defined benefits and if there have been any complaints on MERS compared to Mission Square.

Director Tithof stated that no, there have been no similar issues with the current MERS

plan.

Trustee Wisinski inquired how MERS is currently serving Meridian Township.

Director Tithof noted the current benefits and reliability of MERS.

Trustee Wisinski inquired if 84% of municipalities were using MERS.

Director Tithof stated that she would have to confirm with her MERS liaison, but according to the materials, she believed that was correct.

Clerk Guthrie inquired on the status of other comparisons and why they weren't presented at this meeting.

Township Manager Walsh stated that they did reach out to Mission Square for a comparison to present to the Board, but their request was ignored and then denied.

Supervisor Jackson spoke on this topic.

Trustee Wilson spoke on this topic.

Trustee Sundland spoke on this topic.

Trustee Hendrickson inquired what penalties would we suffer if we ended our contract with Mission Square. He further inquired what level of commitment there is if we enter into an agreement with MERS but leave 6 months in, as an example.

Director Tithof stated that Mission Square has no penalty for leaving. She further noted that she doesn't believe there would be a contractual requirement to stay with MERS, but she would have to talk to her MERS liaison for that information.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke on this topic.

Trustee Wilson moved to migrate Mission Square defined contribution 401a, 457 and retiree health savings plans to Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS). Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Trustee Wilson spoke in support for this motion.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support for this motion.

Trustee Hendrickson moved to amend the presented motion to add the following at the end of said motion: and concurrently begin the RFP process to be completed no later than February 28th. 2024. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Clerk Guthrie, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Wilson

Motion carried: 4-3

Clerk Guthrie inquired if this would be implemented immediately if the motion passes.

Manager Walsh stated that we would have to get in queue, which adding the approved amendment may put us further back in queue. He did state that this would be implemented after the vote.

Motion to migrate Mission Square defined contribution 401a, 457 and retiree health savings plans to Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) and concurrently begin the RFP process to be completed no later than February 28th, 2024.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. 2nd Quarter Budget Amendments

Interim Finance Director Blonde outlined the presented 2nd quarter budget amendments.

Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the second quarter 2023 budget amendments with an increase in budgeted fund balance for the general fund in the amount of \$697,480 which projects a use of fund balance of \$6,895,906 based on the 2022 results the projected fund balance at December 31, 2023 will be \$8,375,000.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of the presented amendments.

Trustee Wisinski spoke in support of the presented amendments.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Special Use Permit #23-012 – The W, Investment Holdings – 1614 West Grand River Avenue – Medical Marihuana Provisioning Center

Director of Community Planning and Development Schmitt outlined the discussion item.

Trustee Hendrickson inquired on the updated natural features assessment, whether they were using the old one or the new one.

Director Schmitt noted that there isn't a new assessment.

Trustee Hendrickson asked the applicant on why the parking lot was placed where it was.

Applicant Ammar Alkhafaji (W Investors Group; 29580 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 1000, Southfield, MI 48034) stated that the sloping on the site made the board suggestions difficult to implement.

B. Senior/Community Center

Trustee Wilson outlined the updates for the planned senior/community center. She requested to go forward with rendering of the building.

Township Manager Walsh spoke in support of moving forward.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke on the price points for the building process.

Trustee Hendrickson suggested doing interior renderings as well. He inquired on utilizing the parking lot of Meridian Mall as a build site.

Trustee Wilson stated that hasn't been discussed, and further noted that the current property being looked at is owned by the Township, so it would avoid an additional cost.

Treasurer Deschaine noted that due to lease agreements, the mall would have to have a major leasing shift to accommodate a recommendation like Trustee Hendrickson suggested.

Trustee Wisinski inquired whether the funding that we have from state legislatures would revert back should we not go through with the project.

Trustee Wilson stated that this is being looked into.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke on this topic.

Clerk Guthrie inquired if this would be further discussed during the assigned listening sessions, or if it would be its own unique line of listening sessions.

Trustee Wilson stated that the planned listening sessions would be the ideal time to get feedback on this topic.

Township Manager Walsh stated the need to be careful on over designing or under designing according to our funds.

C. Meridian Township Renewable Energy Plan Overview

Director of Public Works and Deputy Township Manager Opsommer outlined the renewable energy plan overview for the board via presentation.

Supervisor Jackson inquired if the senior/community center was to be added by the central fire station, could they expand the proposed solar panels.

Director Opsommer stated that yes, they could expand it fairly easily.

Supervisor Jackson inquired if some of the panels would ever be in risk of being flooded.

Director Opsommer answered that these were being planned to be built on a raised hill.

Supervisor Jackson inquired why they were avoiding roof panels as a viable option.

Director Opsommer stated that it makes it difficult to redo roofing when it eventually needs it.

Supervisor Jackson inquired on the cost estimation, if that included the entire project.

Director Opsommer stated that yes, it includes the entire project.

Trustee Wisinski inquired whether Director Opsommer will be talking to the Environmental Commission on the presented options. She also inquired on where the budget is coming from.

Director Opsommer stated that he will be speaking with the Environmental Commission on August 2nd, 2023. He further noted the tight 2023 fiscal budget, so they will be discussing that with Township Manager Walsh.

Clerk Guthrie inquired on how deep their need to bore for electrical conduit.

Director Opsommer stated 12-14 inches deep.

Trustee Hendrickson spoke in support of the renewable energy plans presented.

Trustee Wisinski spoke on the importance of implementing solar ordinances going forward.

Treasurer Deschaine spoke in support of the renewable energy plans presented. He inquired about utilizing battery storage.

Director Opsommer stated that battery storage is possible, but financially not feasible due to the high cost of lithium currently.

Clerk Guthrie inquired on the placement of the solar parking spot covers at the Municipal Building.

Director Opsommer stated that this was a mock-up to demonstrate the size of the proposed solar spot covers.

Supervisor Jackson inquired whether this is going into the Masterplan, and how the board can proceed with this.

Director Opsommer outlined the course of action going forward.

D. Listening Sessions Itinerary

Township Manager Walsh spoke on the upcoming listening sessions.

Supervisor Jackson inquired if there would be a second letter sent out.

Township Manager Walsh stated that yes, and they will be reaching out to neighborhood leaders as well.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Jackson opened comments from the public at 8:24pm.

Supervisor Jackson closed comments from the public at 8:24pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

NONE

16. ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adjourn the August 1st, 2023 regular Township Board meeting. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE

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

NAYS: None

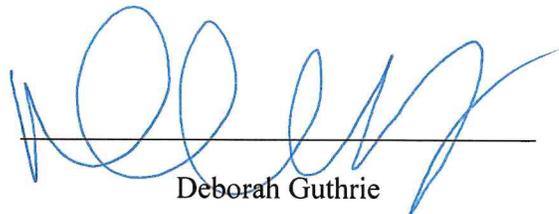
Motion carried: 7-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.



Patricia Jackson

Township Supervisor



Deborah Guthrie

Township Clerk