

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN - **APPROVED**-
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
TUESDAY, October 17, 2023, **6:00 pm**

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

ABSENT: Trustee Sundland

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Director Schmitt, Communications Manager Deihl, Finance
Director Ianni, Director Gebes, Police Chief Grillo, Police Captain Crane, Fire Chief
Hamel, Deputy Clerk Gordon

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Jackson called the October 17, 2023, Regular Township Board meeting to order at
6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Deputy Clerk Gordon called the roll of the Board. Six Board Members present, Trustee Sundland
absent.

4. PRESENTATION

Ted Farris of Boy Scout Troop 125 Pancake Breakfast Presentation – Check donated by Fire
Chief Hamel and Lieutenant Weber to the Muscular Dystrophy Association in the amount of
\$250.00 and to Meridian Scouts Camper Scholarship in the amount of \$1267.47.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Jackson opened comments from the public at 6:09 pm

Tim Potter, Township resident – Spoke regarding safe routes to school for Okemos Schools.

Supervisor Jackson closed comments from the public at 6:13 pm

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh provided updates on the following items:

- Paid parental leave policy.
- 37 deer have been culled as part of the deer culling program.
- Praised Director Clark for the great work with the DDA and TIF.
- Met with MEDC on Friday about Village of Okemos.
- Brownfield met on Thursday.
- Police Department will hold Halloween open house on October 28th, from 10:00 am –
1:00 pm

- New HOMTV equipment has been installed.
- The Great Divide takes place with East Lansing and Meridian Fire on October 20, 2023
- Chief Grillo is working on pedestrian safety.
- Haslett School Resource Officer is now in place.
- The local road project is wrapping up, with Wardcliff being the final neighborhood.
- Pension Board is meeting November 6th.
- Parks and Recreation Director applications are due October 27th.
- Reno the police K9 is out of service.
- Farmers market is moving back inside to the mall.
- Thanked Coach Lubahn of MSU Men's Golf and Director Alan Haller for the Mteam building event.
- Recognized Danneisha McDole, Robin Faust, Jack Hughes, Keith Hewitt, John Hines for their work anniversaries.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Wilson attended the Community Resource Commission meeting last week. The coat drive gathered more than 100 coats. Have a wider distribution of food baskets than ever before. Has joined a group of stakeholders looking to mitigate school safety in Okemos.

Trustee Hendrickson attended the listening session at Hiawatha, spoke about updates for safety with Okemos schools, Spoke on the pedestrian upgrades near Okemos schools.

Trustee Wisinski attended the listening session and thanked the public for attending, attended the Election Commission meeting to discuss early voting plan, attended the Land Preservation Advisory Board meeting.

Clerk Guthrie attended the Friends of Okemos Library meeting and spoke about storage facilities costs, expressed gratitude to residents for attending the listening sessions.

Treasurer Deschaine missed the listening session due to his attendance at the Michigan Township Association training. Met with Trustee Hendrickson and Director Clark regarding the Corridor Improvement Authority

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Supervisor Jackson made a recommendation to amend the agenda by adding 13a Meridian Township Public Safety recruitment and retention program.

Supervisor Jackson moved to approve the change to the agenda. Seconded by Clerk Guthrie

Treasurer Dechaine moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Wisinski

VOICE VOTE: **YEAS:** Trustee Wilson, Trustee Wisinski, Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Jackson reviewed the Consent Agenda

Trustee Hendrickson moved consent with the exception of item F. the Board meeting schedule. Supported by Clerk Guthrie

Treasurer Deschaine requested to amend the October 3, 2023, minutes by changing Ritter last name Witter and adding that he is a 50-year member of the Kiwanis Club of Haslett and Okemos.

Trustee Hendrickson accepted the change.

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

NAYS: 0

Motion carried: 6-0

Trustee Hendrickson Moved to adopt the 2024 board meeting resolution with two amendments moving May 7 to May 9 and August 13 to August 8. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE **YEAS:** Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Wisinski, Supervisor Jackson

NAYS: 0

Motion carried: 6-0

Treasurer Deschaine moved to change the August 27 meeting to August 20. Supported by Trustee Hendrickson.

VOICE VOTE **YEAS:** Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Wilson, Trustee Wisinski, Supervisor Jackson

NAYS: 0

Motion carried: 6-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY

NONE

11. HEARINGS

NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Ordinance 2023-05 Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Housing Updates- Introduction

Director Schmitt spoke on ordinance and the changes that are being proposed for Accessory Dwelling Units. Treasurer Deschaine and Trustee Wisinski spoke in support of affordable housing. Board members asked clarifying questions regarding affordable housing.

Wisinski moved to adopt the resolution approving the introduction Zoning Amendment #2023-05 to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the Charter Township of Meridian at multiple sections to bring the Zoning Ordinance in line with the RRC program guidelines. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 6-0

B. Early Voting Plan

Deputy Clerk Gordon presented the Early voting plan. Board Members asked questions regarding the volume of people that may choose to vote early and the capacity of the Township Boardroom to handle large quantities of people.

Clerk Guthrie moved to approve the Meridian Township Early Voting Plan and Early Voting Site by resolution at the October 17, 2023, Township Board Meeting and direct the Clerk to submit the Early Voting Plan and Resolution to the County Clerk by October 30, 2023. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: 0

Motion carried: 6-0

C. Meridian Township Investment Policy Update

Treasurer Deschaine spoke on the changes that were made to the Investment Policy, as discussed in the October 3, 2023, meeting.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the 2023 Investment Policy with revisions as presented to the Board. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: 0

Motion carried: 6-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Meridian Township Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Program

Manager Walsh gave an overview regarding issues with staffing. Chief Grillo provided a presentation surrounding low staffing and what the police department is currently doing to recruit police officers.

- Manager Walsh spoke about the plan to implement a retention and referral bonus program and the financial impacts.
- Board Members asked questions pertaining to what has been done in other communities, what the wages are in other communities, if the timeline is long enough or if more money should be given to the program.
- Manager Walsh will be providing quarterly reports to keep the Board updated.
- Trustee Hendrickson asked how morale was within the department.
- Chief Grillo spoke about the intention to target lateral transfers.
- Board Members asked to open referral bonus for police to all Meridian Township staff.
- Manager Walsh wants to bring this back for approval for the November 9th Board meeting.

B. IT Project - Brightline Update

Director Gebes updated the Board on IT updates, as well as new technology equipment. Trustee Wilson asked if disaster recovery service is out of this region. Trustee Hendrickson praised Director Gebes on how quickly his team has been working.

C. Fire Protection and Emergency Services Cost Recovery Ordinance Update

Chief Hamel spoke on the ordinance update and what it entailed. Board Members asked clarifying questions about why it was a necessary update and how the Township will be deciding what circumstances result in a charge for services. Chief Hamel gave examples of different situations that would result in someone being billed for fire services. Trustee Hendrickson asked for additional clarity for A, B, C and D from legal counsel before it comes back for action.

D. Recreational Marijuana Licensing Standards

Director Schmitt gave background regarding the process for licensing. The Township Attorney added to what Director Schmitt spoke about and provided different options the board can take in how to proceed with reviewing Marijuana facility applications.

Board Members discussed how to proceed. Five Board Members agreed on an advisory committee to review applications to offer suggestions to the Board, with Board Members on the committee. Clerk Guthrie did not support Board Members being part of the advisory committee suggesting licensing for marijuana follow same procedures as other licensing procedures through staff.

Board members agree to have the draft process presented at the November 21, 2023, Board Meeting.

E. MDHDA's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Improving Local Livability (CHILL) Program

Director Schmitt introduced the program and spoke about the letter that was sent to show interest in Michigan State Housing Development Authority to obtain CDBG funding dollars. Director Schmitt gave information on how that money would be spent in targeted neighborhoods to add improvements. Board Members liked the idea of rehab and a neighborhood targeted approach. Trustee Wilson asked if any consideration had been given to Winslow Trailer Park. Director Schmitt spoke on the next steps for the November 9th meeting when this is brought back to the Board.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Jackson opened comments from the public at 9:21pm

Josh Stam, Township resident – Spoke in favor of early voting and gave suggestions on how to bring the workload down on police.

Supervisor Jackson closed comments from the public at 9:24 pm

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Hendrickson spoke about the north entrance to the Township and updates to signage.

Trustee Wisinski asked Chief Grillo about social workers on staff.

Treasurer Deschaine asked Chief Grillo about a recent incident in Towar Gardens

16. ADJOURNMENT

Clerk Guthrie moved to adjourn. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine

VOICE VOTE

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

NAYS: 0

Motion carried: 6-0



Patricia Jackson

Township Supervisor



Deborah Guthrie

Township Clerk