



charter township

oshtemo NEWSLETTER!

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September 2014

How to contact YOUR Oshtemo Township Officials



Assessor Cathy Harrell 216-5225 choshtwp@oshtemo.org

Treasurer Nancy Culp 216-5221 ncoshtwp@oshtemo.org

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell 216-5220 libbyhc@oshtemo.org

Clerk Deb Everett 216-5224 deverett@oshtemo.org

Planning Director Greg Milliken 216-5223 [gmiliken@oshtemo.org](mailto:gmilliken@oshtemo.org)

Ordinance Enforcement Rick Suwarsky 216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org

Fire Chief Mark Barnes 375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

Trustee Dusty Farmer 389-9355 dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Trustee Dave Bushouse 370-4307 dboshtwp@oshtemo.org

Trustee Nancy Carr 271-4359 nancycarr@pprmi.com

Trustee Lee Larson 375-0068 lee.larson@ameritech.net

Don't know who to call....General Information = 375-4260

2014 Dump Days

Sept 27 Oct 25 Nov 22

Township Hall Parking Lot

9 am to 3 pm

No yard waste, kitchen garbage, dead animals, hazardous materials, or large quantity of building materials can be accepted.

2014 LEAF DROP OFF DAYS

Nov 8 and Nov 22

Hauler cannot accept plastic bags, paper bags can be placed in the truck.



SECURE YOUR ID DAY...

FREE SHREDDING

Oshtemo Township is partnering with Data Guardian again this year to offer free shredding on Secure Your ID Day

October 18th

9 am to 11:30 am

Oshtemo Township Hall

Maximum of 10 boxes (banker box size)



2014 FLU SHOT CLINIC

Oshtemo Township Hall
7275 West Main

Borgess Home Care

Wednesday, October 15

10 am to 11 am

Questions? Call 226.7000 or visit the web site at www.flushot.borgess.com



BLOOD DRIVE NEWS!!

Wednesday, October 22—11am—6pm

Wednesday, December 17—11 am—6 pm

June & August gift card winners were Jim Yonker and Kay Engelbrecht!!

Bi-Monthly Blood Drives held at 7275 West Main. Appointments can be made with Michigan Blood by phone 1-866-MIBLOOD or email miblood.org.

SALVATION ARMY COAT DRIVE

October 1 thru October 31



Help make someone's winter a little warmer.....The Township Office will be a drop off point for the Salvation Army's coat drive. A barrel will be in the lobby for your gently used coats and jackets.



TAX REMINDER...Summer taxes are due September 14th.

Payments will be accepted on Monday, September 15th as on time. Mailed payments must be postmarked no later than September 14th and received by the 18th to be considered on time.

Captain Chip Everett is honored with National Training Award.

The annual Fire-Rescue International conference was held in Dallas, TX on August 13 – 16. This year’s conference was especially memorable for the 2014 Training Officer Recognition Award ceremony. That ceremony is presented jointly by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Volunteer & Combination Officers Section (VCOS) and sponsored by Target Solutions.

Captain Chip Everett of Oshtemo Township Fire and Rescue Department edged out a large group of worthy candidates who were nominated for the special honor. He accepted the award created to acknowledge exemplary conduct befitting a training officer at a special ceremony by the VCOS.

When Everett first learned he was being recognized for the training he delivers as his department’s training and safety officer, he was taken aback. “I was really surprised and very humbled, I didn’t even know I had been nominated,” said Everett, whose combination department employs six full-time and 30 on-call members responsible for answering around 2,000 calls each year. “It is always nice to be recognized for the work you do and the time you put in. But at



the same time, I don’t know about having the focus on me, necessarily. We have a really solid group in our county and we do a lot of joint training. It’s not just one person, it’s a broader effort.”

That might be true, but Oshtemo Deputy Chief Rick

Griffin believes Everett’s impact on the department and the Kalamazoo County Training Committee has been monumental. In his nomination form, Griffin cited numerous areas where Everett has gone above and beyond, including his work to help standardize training throughout the county, working with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) committee, attending the National Fire Academy and train-the-trainer classes to improve his delivery techniques, and many other contributions to the department’s training program.



“Chip continues to develop new ways to provide training,” Griffin said. “One of the recent additions to our department training is a ‘road rally.’ This not only allows our drivers to pick the best route to addresses, but gives the crews tasks to complete at each address. The team with the best time to complete all tasks gets rewarded with dinner. This has helped build teamwork and camaraderie. His tireless effort to make sure we are one of the leaders in our county makes him the go-to-guy for not only our department, but for members of all of our county’s departments.”

According to Oshtemo Fire Chief Mark Barnes, who is president of the Kalamazoo County Fire Chief’s Association, “Chip has a humble leadership style. As a vital member of our countywide training committee, he is able to transmit his vision and talents in a fashion that encourages active participation and adoption by other local jurisdictions. He has fostered the instillation of national fire service leaders to present their ideas at our annual regional training conference. He is truly a worthy recipient of this award.”

Would you like to be more involved in your community? Visit our website at www.oshtemo.org and download an application to serve as an election inspector or board/committee member.



Public Media Network—Township Board Meetings are available with the following weekly replay schedule:

Tuesday 1 am, Wednesday 3 pm,
Friday 7 pm, Saturday 8 am.

You may also view them on demand at pmn.pegcentral.com. Kalamazoo County Board of Commission & Kalamazoo County Road Commission meetings are also available.

Burn Permits made EASY!!

In our efforts to continuously improve service, we are seeing a continued increase in citizens using the Township’s website to obtain their burning permits. Although phone calls remain acceptable, crews are not always in the building and thus multiple calls are sometimes necessary.

The website works every time: www.oshtemo.org



Township Office Hours

Monday thru Thursday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Friday 8:00 am to 1:00 pm
(1st Thurs each month open at 9 am)
We will be **CLOSED:**

Tuesday, Nov 11th—Veterans Day
Thursday & Friday, Nov 27th & 28th—Thanksgiving

From the Supervisor's Office.....

The Township Board and staff continue to work tirelessly on your behalf. The Board welcomes your valuable input and respectful participation. Applications to serve on Boards and Committees are available online or at the Township Office. Many citizens already volunteer time and valuable expertise on behalf of our Oshtemo community. If you would like to discuss before completing an application form, please contact me at 216-5220.

The Township Board meetings are regularly scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month, and the fourth Tuesdays every other month starting in February. These meetings are recorded by student interns and subsequently aired publicly via the Public Media Network, on both a scheduled basis and on demand at the PMN website at pmn.pegcentral.com. With recent upgrades to the internet transmission line at the Township Hall, we are working with PMN to provide live broadcast of the meetings. Stay tuned.

Annually, the Board holds three or four budget workshops in August and September, staggering the times to be available to a broader number of residents and property owners. The draft budget is developed, and subsequently reviewed at an official public hearing in November. The first budget workshop was August 26th, from 1 to 3 pm, and the remaining workshops are on Sept 9th and September 23rd, from 5 to 7 pm. The budget process is the means by which services and projects are prioritized and funded. We welcome additional input, and the Board will use the recent community survey results as a guide. With an overall 71% community satisfaction rating, there is not a need for drastic re-direction. However, this Supervisor works toward a judicious continuous improvement approach, with review and redirection specifically and accordingly.

Various capital projects will be discussed as the long term capital improvement plan is developed. Examples of these are sewer projects, park facilities, sidewalk and trail projects, and Fire Department building facilities and vehicles. In the past, long term plans have been developed. Going forward, more coordination between the various plans are being developed working with our financial consultant, and this information will be incorporated into a refined funding and budgeting process. (In the past the Township has been "accused" of having excessive fund balance. In comparison to the capital item needs, an excessive fund balance point is invalid. The long-term past budgeting practice was conservative and savings were attained, so as to have monies available for large projects. The Township is in the black because of this practice. The goal for the budget going forward is to clarify what those capital items are and approximately when the money will be used).

In review of 2013 financials, the Board discussed the annual audit in June at the public meeting. The audit is available to you online at <https://treas-secure.state.mi.us/LAFDocSearch/>. Generally, the Township is in an excellent financial position. No irregularities were found. The Township received five competitive proposals for the 2014 audit consultant service, and the Board will soon make a decision to select one of the proposals. In taking this step, the Board will split the accounting and auditing services for 2014 and subsequent audits, thus eliminating a "material weakness" in the annual audit.

The Supervisor's Office has and continues toward more transparency; the Board meeting packet with all receipts and disbursements is placed online the Friday or Monday before the Tuesday meetings. The annual budget is also available online at the Township website. If you ever have questions about an agenda item or expenditure, please call or email.

The Township Board in late 2013 increased the police assessment, due to the staff and citizen police sub-committee identified need for increased police protection. However, the Board also was clear that any increase in the police service contract needed to include methods to measure accountability and to improve communication with Township staff, residents, and business owners. In 2014, per additional staff research and recommendation, the Board hired the Center for Public Safety Management to gain more information so that the future contract can be better honed and more specific to the Township needs. The consultant work is ongoing and will be considered at Board meetings this fall. It is important for the community to know that the money collected for police protection will only be used for police protection. It will not be squandered, nor will it be used absent a contract which serves the needs of the community.

Capital efforts of the Township include sidewalk and trail construction on North Drake Road. The construction process is not yet complete, but will be this fall. Design work and grant applications for sidewalks and trail are ongoing for South Drake Road, North 10th Street, and KL Avenue. The Township is using all avenues of grant funding in combination with required "local match" to stretch our dollars.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns at libbyhc@oshtemo.org or 216.5220.

Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Supervisor

PARK NEWS....



Township Park continues to be enjoyed by many every day and was again host of "Movies in the Park". Unfortunately, the August date was cancelled due to weather but many enjoyed the June and July offerings. We thank Kalamazoo Public Library, the Consumers Sunburst Run, and Oshtemo Friends of the Parks for their support and contributions to these family friendly events! Other on going activities include a rain garden to address drainage and run off issues with plans to complete the planting yet this fall. Tennis lessons were offered this summer and a fall session will begin September 2nd. Information is available on the Notice Board of our web page or contact Let's Serve Tennis Club at 216.8415 or wotennispro20@gmail.com Come walk the trails this fall and enjoy the beautiful display of color in the park!

Flesher Field saw major renovations begin with Phase I including the reconfigured parking lot, new restroom building, and a paved loop path; final touches will be completed this fall. Two major community events, Oshtemo Rotary's 17th Annual Fun Day and the Kalamazoo Scottish Festival & Highland Games drew thousands to the park. Phase II will include a new playground, a second picnic shelter, a new gazebo with garden space, and relocation of two wiffleball fields. With the addition of a second pavilion, one will be available for reservation as will the gazebo and garden space. Pending final approval of the construction plans by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, source of the grant funding for the project, a substantial portion may be completed yet this fall.



Grange Hall preliminary renovation plans are nearing completion; fund raising efforts including seeking grants, private donations, and partnerships with users, will be undertaken to accomplish this major project. A grant application is pending for a small playground; the required match was provided by private donations.

Visit our web site at www.oshtemo.org for information regarding the various rental opportunities for these facilities.

Oshtemo Township Parks and Recreation Endowment Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation was created to support our parks and recreation projects for generations to come. If you are interested in making a gift, please contact Township Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell or Parks Administrator Karen High at 375-4260. Gifts may also be made directly to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation at www.kalfound.org.

ITC/METC POWER LINE LITIGATION

As many residents know, the Township is opposing the construction of a new power line within the Township. The transmission line company's own report shows that the best location for this proposed power line is near I-94, not cut through a pristine oak savanna in Oshtemo Township. The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) issued a certificate of convenience which authorized the construction of the power line earlier this year; the Township and a group of Township citizens whose properties are impacted by the proposed power line have challenged that ruling at the Court of Appeals.

While the action was pending at the Court of Appeals, ITC/METC sued in local Circuit Court to condemn and take easements across private property and Township property. The Township and the local citizens group opposed this action at the Circuit Court level, but were unsuccessful. However, in cooperation with the citizens group, the Township joined in filing a motion for a stay at the Court of Appeals in order to stop the condemnation and the construction of the power line while awaiting a ruling from the Court of Appeals.

In an unprecedented fashion, the Court of Appeals not only granted our motion for immediate consideration and waived certain court rule requirements, but granted the stay pending a hearing on the appeal of the MPSC's ruling. This victory cannot be overstated. Without the stay from the Court of Appeals, this power line might very well have been built before the Court of Appeals could have ever ruled on our case. At this point in time, we are now assured that nothing will take place until the Court of Appeals has had a chance to rule on the citizens group's and Township's claim of appeal.



News from the Clerk's Office

August Primary - 15% of our 16,614 registered voters turned out to vote.

Dates to Remember -

October 6 - Last day to register for the November 4th General Election.

November 4 - General Election – polls open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



Not sure where to vote?

A precinct map is available on our web site at www.oshtemo.org/maps-and-directions. Your precinct location is shown on your voter ID card, you can check on line at www.michigan.gov/vote or contact the Clerk's Office at 216.5224 along with any other questions you have regarding voter registration or absentee ballots.

Absentee Ballots -

Voters age 60 or older or those with a permanent disability can request to be placed on our permanent absentee voter list and will automatically receive an application for an absentee ballot prior to each election.

Any voter meeting the required criteria can request an absentee ballot application by phone or complete the application available on our website under the "Applications" link. A ballot can also be requested by mail but must provide your name, registered address, the address where the ballot should be mailed, date of birth, reason for needing to vote by absentee ballot (see criteria below) and your signature.

Required Criteria are:

- age 60 years old or older, or
- unable to vote without assistance at the polls, or
- expecting to be out of town on election day, or
- in jail awaiting arraignment or trial, or
- unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons, or
- appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence

NEW!! PHOTO ID REQUIREMENT FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS Per Michigan Election Law, if you are obtaining your absentee ballot in person, you will be requested to show photo ID. This requirement does not apply if requesting your ballot via mail.

****Please note a first time voter, who registered by mail, must vote in person in the first election in which they participate. This restriction does not apply to voters who are active duty military, overseas, disabled or 60 years of age or older.****

AUDIT OF MINIMUM ASSESSING REQUIREMENTS

Recently the State Tax Commission conducted an audit on all assessing jurisdictions in Kalamazoo County. The results are in.....

The State Tax Commission found: Oshtemo is assessing all properties uniformly, there was a 1.1% error rate in uncapping the taxable value of properties that sold, Oshtemo's assessments do include new construction as defined in 211.34d of the General Property Tax Act, and Oshtemo achieved a 94% accuracy rating on the information in the assessment roll.

Things that need to be worked on include: Land Value Mapping techniques, Developing ECF and land values in areas with very few sales.

If you have questions regarding this information please contact Assessor Cathy Harrell at choshtwp@oshtemo.org or 216.5225.

OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

The Oshtemo Historical Society celebrated its 10th Anniversary this year with a party at the Drake Farmstead. The community was invited to view the progress of the restoration of the Drake House and enjoy entertainment and refreshments. There were many booths to browse through with antiques, collectibles and crafts. We appreciate the support from the community and the growth in our membership in the last ten years. We have seen it go from as few as 10 to 130!



The following programs will be offered this fall and are open to the public. They are held at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 W. Main, unless otherwise specified and begin at 7:00 p.m.

- September 18th** **Richard Cahow** tells the story of “**The Greatest Generation at Kalamazoo Central High School**”. This award-winning, retired, history teacher shares the contributions of our valiant young men in WWII.
- October 16^h** **Ilah Henderson**, OHS member, presents, “**The Lives and Contributions of Two Oshtemo Pioneer Families – the Dewaters and the Andersons**”
(This program will be held at Bronson Place, 1700 Bronson Way.)
- October 19th** **Free open house**, 2pm to 4pm, for tours of the Drake House at 927 N. Drake Rd.
- November 20th** **Pam Larson**, Communications Director for SW MI Land Conservancy, “**SWMLC – An Overview, and Plain Air Artists of West Michigan**”. Hear about the SWMLC’s work in 9 counties and the art done on protected properties by PAAWM.

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