



charter township

oshtemo NEWSLETTER

est. 1839

December 2015

How to contact your Oshtemo Township Officials

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell 216-5220 libbyhc@oshtemo.org
Clerk Deb Everett 216-5224 deverett@oshtemo.org
Treasurer Nancy Culp 216-5221 ncoshtwp@oshtemo.org
Trustee Nancy Carr 353-7141 nancycarr@bhsmi.com
Trustee Dusty Farmer 251-5832 dfarmer@oshtemo.org
Trustee Zak Ford 271-5513 zak.r.ford@gmail.com
Trustee Grant Taylor 773-456-8777 granttaylor20@gmail.com
Assessor Kristine Biddle 216-5225 kbiddle@oshtemo.org
Planning Director Julie Johnston 216-5223 jjohnston@oshtemo.org
Parks Director Karen High 216-5223 khigh@oshtemo.org
Ordinance Enforcement Rick Suwarsky 216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org
Fire Chief Mark Barnes 375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

Township Office Hours

Monday thru Thursday 8 am to 5 pm
 Friday 8 am to 1 pm
 (1st Thurs each month open at 9 am)

We will be CLOSED

December 24 & 25—Christmas
 January 1—New Years
 January 18—Martin Luther King Day
 February 15—Presidents Day



2015 Winter Tax Information

Winter tax notices were mailed November 30, 2015. If you received a tax bill but have an escrow account, remind your financial institution they must request the bill each tax season; forward the bill to them. If your mortgage holder requested the tax bill, you will not receive a copy, but may contact us and we will be glad to send one to you. Payment can be verified by contacting us or checking our website (www.oshtemo.org) which is updated daily. We accept credit card payments at the Township Office and online; there will be a 3% convenience fee charged by the credit card company. As a reminder, if your tax bill has a note that says "SUMMER TAX BILL DUE" you will need to contact our office for the payoff amount as interest accrues monthly.

Our office hours are Monday thru Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
 We do have a drop box in the parking lot, which is checked daily.

February 16th – winter taxes due without penalty. Postmark of February 16th will be accepted but **MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 22, 2016 WITH NO EXCEPTIONS!**

February 17th – February 29th taxes postmarked or paid at the Township Office after February 16th will be assessed a 3% late fee. If taxes are received without the interest included, we will receipt the taxes and send you a bill for the interest owed.

On March 1st winter taxes are assessed a 3% late fee and 1% penalty. Delinquent summer/winter taxes are turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer's Office and must be paid there.

Please feel free to contact the Treasurer's Office at 216.5221 if you have any questions.

BLOOD DRIVE NEWS



***Wednesday, December 23rd 11 am—6 pm**

Come in for hot soup & chance to win a \$25 gift card!

***Wednesday, February 24 th 11 am—6 pm**

Come in for lasagna & chance to win a \$25 gift card!

August winner was April DeLange

October winner was Linda Billings

Bi-Monthly Blood Drives are held at the Township Hall
 Appointments can be made with Michigan Blood
 by phone 1-866-MIBLOOD or e-mail miblood.org.

CHRISTMAS TREE DROP OFF

Handley's Tree Service

8342 West Main

Thank you Dave Handley for providing this service to Oshtemo residents!



From the Supervisor—

Much work continues by dedicated Staff, Citizen Committees, and Volunteers in Oshtemo! Let us know if you would like to share your expertise and serve your community. Some updates on notable recent efforts follow. I wish you a happy and healthy holiday season and the best in 2016! Libby Heiny-Cogswell—216.5220

OSHTEMO POLICE PROTECTION

Oshtemo welcomes Police Lieutenant Troy Faulk to serve our community. Lt. Faulk possesses great integrity, incredible drive, and many years of police protection experience with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office and with the military. Troy absolutely "hit the ground running" to address multiple policing issues in Oshtemo. He is providing additional and timely reporting of policing issues to the Township. Troy will work to provide additional and comprehensive data and analysis, working collaboratively with the Supervisor and the Township Police Specialist, Jack Shepperly. This will provide information to the Township for key decision making about police patrol staffing levels, police protection priorities, and to track changes in criminal and traffic activity over time. Lt. Faulk is available to meet and/or coordinate meetings for neighborhood watch groups, businesses, and other citizens wishing to notify the Township of police protection issues. He can be reached via email at tfaul@kalcounty.com or by phone at (269) 216-5256, or by mail at the Township Office. Lt. Faulk is frequently out on the road addressing issues, so scheduling a meeting time is best if interested in a face to face meeting. Thank you Oshtemo citizens for your support to provide adequate levels of police protection in Oshtemo Township, support clearly indicated in the 2013 Community Survey.

The Oshtemo Township Board continues to work on negotiations for the 2016 police contract with Kalamazoo County and the Sheriff's Office. (Stay tuned). To that end Oshtemo's professional staff and the Oshtemo Police Committee developed a contract that is not substantively different from how we are currently operating with the Lieutenant in place. The proposed contract changes the road patrol to an expectation of number of hours per week on patrol in the Township, exclusive of deputy court time. This is reflective of our finding that we are already paying for that time and therefore expect that level of service. We do not expect any more, nor less, than what we are paying for. The contract agreement Oshtemo presented addresses the prior issues of accountability and reporting, issues which unfortunately led to more than a decade of chronic, unproductive mistrust. Oshtemo looks forward to dealing effectively with the issues systematically, to correct the problem for the long term. In so doing, if successful, the foundation will be set to continue with our current police protection partnership. Additionally, the contract sets an expectation that if grant funds are available, all parties will work together to receive grant dollars to fund additional community policing.

The Township Board wanted the Lieutenant position in place and operational for some period of time allowing the development of a system of data analysis and reporting prior to adding more contracted patrol deputies. The overarching Oshtemo Police Committee and Board objective is to negotiate a contract more inclusive of Oshtemo Township goals for police protection, and which builds in accountability, reporting, and analysis. In summary, the contract includes expectations for accountability, reporting, and analysis, and personnel and coverage as follows:

(1) Oshtemo Lieutenant	\$158,257
(1) Oshtemo Sergeant	\$139,863
(5) Oshtemo Patrol Deputies, 200 Hours per week	\$605,475
(1) Oshtemo Traffic Deputy, 40 Hours per week	\$121,295
2016 Police Protection Contract w/County & Sheriff	\$1,025,890

The police special assessment districts (SAD) are to remain at the 2013 SAD rate levels. For Commercial and Multi-family properties, the rate is 2.5 mils, and for the balance of the Township, largely residential, the rate remains .5 mils. The 2016 police contract will be paid to the County through the revenue this SAD will generate and through police fund reserves.

2016-2021 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Please take a few minutes to review the 2016-2021 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), available on the Township website notice board at www.oshtemo.org. The plan, developed over months with input from the public and Oshtemo Boards (Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Downtown Development Authority, South Drake Corridor Improvement Authority, Parks Committee, Friends of the Parks, and the Township Board), identifies and prioritizes capital projects in the Township for the next six years. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually during the budget process.

The organization of the plan is essentially in three sections—an overview of the plan and purpose, the summary project lists with numbers in the major Township funds, and descriptions of the projects. The plan provides a "road map" for the Board to annually delineate priorities and address funding, in both the near and long term. At the same time the CIP is written so that the capital priorities of the Township, as developed by professional staff and consultants, working in concert with your elected Board, builds in significantly more public transparency.

BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2016 – SUMMARY POINTS

The complete 2016 Oshtemo Fiscal Budget is available at www.oshtemo.org.

Revenues remain stable across property taxes and state revenue sharing. Assessing administrative fee increased from .1% of tax bill total amount to .5%. This reflects a Board policy change to fund not only the tax appeal tribunal cases, but to fund a portion of the assessing department staff and other expenses through this fee. Oshtemo is one of two entities in the State who do not assess the full 1% assessing administration fee. The .5% remains half of the amount the Township is eligible to assess to cover the cost of assessing services for the Township, schools, County, etc. The Board determined to use general fund monies that would have been spent on assessing services instead for road maintenance projects, which the 2013 community survey indicated is a top priority.

Increased the road maintenance budget from \$200,000 to \$350,000.

Staff 2% Cost of Living Adjustment January 1st, 2016, and up to 1% Performance Increase on work anniversary.

Continuing conversion of records to electronic format projects.

Facilities study for fire, police, maintenance, and the Kalamazoo Building authority. Steps 1 and 2 are budgeted for 2016.

Step 1 (space needs analysis) is currently in process. Step 2 will be authorized after Board discussion of Step 1 results. Any decision to proceed to Step 3 will be made after completion and Board discussion of the first two steps.

Police protection increases: 1) Contracted police services with Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office to include a Lieutenant, Sergeant, Traffic Officer, and five Deputies, and 2) Addition of a part time Oshtemo Police Specialist to assist in review of provision of contracted services.

Overall Maintenance expenses are aligned between 2015 budget and expenses, and they are targeted to remain even for 2016. Staffing levels will remain the same in 2016 and the open part time maintenance position will be filled in last quarter of 2015 or first quarter of 2016.

Health Insurance premiums are increased 2.3%.

Parks has no major construction projects in 2016. Staff will work to develop other future funding sources for parks projects, particularly for the Oshtemo Grange Hall and the Drake Farmstead.

Overall the budget reflects an 8.5% increase in expenditures over 2015, largely due to the execution of capital projects from reserved monies. Refer 2016-2021 Capital Improvement Plan.

Winter Weather Reminders

Township Ordinance requires removal of snow and ice from public sidewalks. Pedestrians, school children, and particularly residents who utilize mobility aids are reliant upon unobstructed and safe use of the sidewalks. Compliance with this ordinance serves to enhance safety of the pedestrian public as well as provide clear access to business. The ordinance provides that the owner or occupant not allow an unreasonable accumulation of snow or ice to remain upon the sidewalk or non-motorized paths/facilities for longer than 48 hours.

Additional information on sidewalk regulations and penalties for non-compliance can be found in Part 294, Ordinance No. 468 of the Oshtemo Township *General Ordinance*, available online at www.oshtemo.org.

If you have any questions regarding sidewalk maintenance, please contact Ordinance Enforcement Officer Rick Suwarsky or Ordinance Enforcement Assistant LouAnn VandenBos at 216.5227 or rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org



Snow plowing of roads and streets in the Township is performed by the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC).

The RCKC policy for plowing streets/roads in order of priority is:

- 1-Designated snow route roads
- 2-Balance of primary roads
- 3-Through local roads
- 4-Subdivision or plat streets
- 5-Dead-end and cul-de-sac roads

REMINDER:

State Law, MCL 257.677a prohibits pushing snow and ice onto, or across, roadways and requires that people do not obstruct the safety vision of motorists.

If you have questions about road maintenance, please contact the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County at 381.3171 or kalamazooountyroads.com

Get Outside and Enjoy Our Parks Year 'Round!

Did you know that spending time outdoors in nature is good for your health? Research shows that being in nature has physical and mental health benefits for people of all ages. Combine these benefits with the health benefits of physical exercise, and you have a winning combination! And it doesn't have to be a summer day...studies show that you gain health benefits from being in nature in winter, too. So don't let cold weather keep you inside, get out and enjoy our parks.

A great place for winter recreation is **Township Park**, located behind the Township offices on West Main Street. Until the snow gets deep, the paved loop trails and the wood chip walking paths are perfect for a winter walk. Once the snow fall is adequate, the walking trails are excellent for snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

If you prefer your winter exercise indoors, check out a dance or a jam session at Oshtemo's **Grange Hall**, located at 3234 North 3rd Street. Dances are sponsored by Country Dance Kalamazoo and include English Country, Contra, and Square dancing. Details on the dances, including dates, times, fee, and type of dance, can be found at <http://people.albion.edu/ram/cdk/> Jam sessions are sponsored by the Grange organization and held the 3rd Friday of each month starting at 6 p.m. They are free and open to the public.



Spring in the Gazebo The new gazebo and garden area at Flesher Field will be ready for action in 2016! Oshtemo's Friends of the Parks (FOP) are planning free, family-oriented outdoor concert(s) at the gazebo. If you'd like to help with planning, contact Karen High, Parks Director, at (269) 216-5223.

The gazebo and garden area can also be rented for weddings and other special events. Check the Township website for more information on gazebo rental, including availability and fee. All rentals include the following:

20' wide gazebo surrounded by garden beds filled with flowering shrubs, ornamental grasses, and wildflowers. A crushed stone center aisle designed for the bride's big entrance with an aisle on each side for arriving guests.

Lawn area with space for approximately 200 guests, gently sloped to maximize views of the gazebo (chairs not provided). Tent space, if desired (tent not provided).

Electricity available at the gazebo and designated tent space.

A 30' x 30' picnic shelter nearby can be rented with the gazebo and garden for an additional fee.

Full day or half day rentals available. Discounted fee for Township residents.

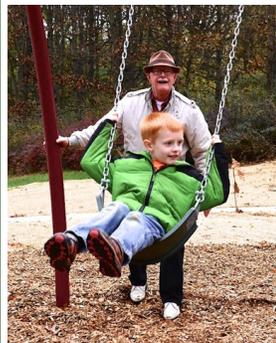
The park also features a new playground, wiffleball fields, restrooms, a second picnic shelter, mowed playing field, and a paved loop trail.

The park is open from dawn to half an hour after sunset. Alcohol not permitted.



Grange Hall Playground is ready for play! Our new Grange Hall Playground is complete! It includes a four seat swing set, a spinning toy, and a race car spring toy. A small picnic area has been added, and new barrier free sidewalks provide access to both the play area and basketball court. The project was funded through a \$30,000 grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, with \$10,000 in private donations to match the grant funds. The new playground was designed by Larry Harris of LL Harris Landscape Architects and built by Mark Miedema of Apex Contractors in conjunction with Diane Sinclair of Sinclair Recreation.

The Township is currently exploring funding sources to add a modest addition to the northwest corner of the Grange Hall in order to provide barrier free access to the building. The addition will house a new staircase and a small elevator. Restroom upgrades and other improvements to make the building accessible are also planned. This project was designed by Nelson Nave, a local architect specializing in historic buildings. Site improvements, including landscaping and storm water management, were designed by Larry Harris. No construction date for the addition is set. For more information, contact Karen High, Parks Director, at 216-5223.



Oshtemo Parks Endowment Fund Need a unique holiday gift idea? Please consider a donation to the Oshtemo Township Parks and Recreation Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

<http://www.kalfound.org>



Welcome Planning Director Julie Johnston

Oshtemo Township is pleased to announce the addition of Julie Johnston to our staff as Planning Director. She has a Masters Degree in City and Regional Planning and is certified through the American Institute of Certified Planners. Julie comes with a varied and knowledgeable background in planning, grant administration, and supervision.

Please contact Julie or Zoning Administrator Ben Clark at 216.5223 with questions regarding building setbacks, zoning, site plans, or other planning and zoning inquiries or visit the Planning Department on our website at www.oshtemo.org

DOG LICENSES

The Township will be selling dog licenses from December 1st to March 1st. Proof of current rabies vaccination is required and the vaccination must be more than 30 days from expiration at the time of license purchase. After a dog is over 1 year of age, proof of spay or neuter is required to purchase a license at the altered rate.



Full Year License – Spayed/Neutered - \$10.00
Full Year License – Not Spayed/Neutered - \$40.00

Façade Improvement Grant Program from Oshtemo's Downtown Development Authority



The Oshtemo Downtown Development Authority is pleased to announce the formation of a new grant program available to business and commercial property owners located within the boundaries of Authority's District. The Façade Grant Program provides funding assistance for the improvement of commercial facades to enhance and beautify the traditional Oshtemo Village area.

General Program Overview:

Grants may be made by the DDA Grant Committee for up to \$5,000.

The applicant will be responsible to cover at least 50 percent of the project costs.

Payment of the grant is reimbursable after proof of expenses have been submitted to the DDA.

Eligible projects will improve the exterior of the building. No interior improvements are eligible under this grant program.

Work must be in accordance with the Township Master Plan, Village Form-Based Code Overlay District, and all other zoning and general ordinances of the Township. The Master Plan and Ordinances can be found at www.oshtemo.org

The DDA reserves the right to modify, return or deny any grant applications.

Please see <http://www.oshtemo.org/boards-and-committees/> and look under **Downtown Development Authority** for a map of the Downtown Development Authority's boundaries and a complete list of the terms and conditions for the program called Façade Grant Program General Requirements. If you have additional questions, please contact Julie Johnston, Planning Director at 216-5223.

Meet our New Assessor.....Oshtemo welcomes professional Assessor Kristine Biddle. Kristine started in Oshtemo in September, and is working concertedly to create efficiencies in the department and on the three remaining issues from the state audit review, which will be corrected in the 2016 assessment roll.

She has a degree in Finance with an emphasis in Real Estate from Western Michigan University, has achieved a Michigan Advanced Assessing Officer Level 3 (required by State Law for Oshtemo given our cumulative valuation), and brings a wealth of drive and twelve years of Assessor experience to the Township. Kristine's father also works in the Township, for DeNooyer Chevrolet in the detailing department, and her 9 year old son Ian is a fast fan of the Township Park spider climber.



LOST & FOUND



Did you lose something when visiting one of our parks? We have a lost and found in the Township Office with items that have been found left behind in our parks. Please contact the Township Office at 375.4260. We hold the items for 90 days then donate any usable items to charity.



Look for 2016 dump dates and leaf drop off dates in the March newsletter.



Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season!



Enroll Kalamazoo County Offers Events for Health Insurance Assistance

Enroll Kalamazoo is a collaborative effort to improve access to healthcare through the coordination of education and outreach activities. Formed in November 2013, the organization provides coordination of healthcare enrollment activities related to Health Insurance Marketplaces and Medicaid Expansion. Certified Counselors providing free assistance will be available in Oshtemo:

Oshtemo Community Center, 6407 Parkview Avenue

December 1st—12pm to 3pm

January 13th—3pm to 6pm

No appointment is necessary

Attendees will need to provide a social security number or document number for immigrants. They will also need to bring their email address, estimated income information for 2016, and policy numbers for any current health insurance plan they may already have.

Open enrollment is November 1, 2015 to January 31, 2016

Re-enrollment/update coverage deadline is December 15, 2015

All plans purchased through the Federal Marketplace Exchange expire December 31st.

For other dates, times and locations, contact Enroll Kalamazoo County by calling 341.6263 or visit

enrollkalamazoo.org or Facebook at [facebook.com/enroll.kalamazoo](https://www.facebook.com/enroll.kalamazoo)



ELECTION NEWS.....



2016 Dates to Remember:

March 8th Presidential Primary—deadline to register is February 8th

May 3rd School/County Election—deadline to register is April 4th

August 2nd General Primary—deadline to register is July 5th

November 8th General Election—deadline to register is October 11th

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Required Criteria to qualify for an absentee ballot are:

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



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, fax, or e-mail but **must include** your name, registered address, the address where the ballot should be mailed, date of birth, reason for needing to vote by absentee ballot and your signature. Per Michigan Election Law, if you are obtaining your absentee ballot in person, you will be requested to show photo ID. If you are not in possession of photo ID, you can simply sign an affidavit stating you are not in possession of photo ID. This requirement does not apply if requesting your ballot via mail.

PRECINCT INSPECTORS NEEDED

The Clerk’s Office is accepting applications for precinct inspectors. Training is required and will take place next summer prior to the August primary. With the advent of the electronic poll book, computer proficiency is a desired skill for our precinct inspectors. Applications are available on our website at www.oshtemo.org under the Applications & Permits link on the home page.

Please call the Clerk’s Office at 216.5224 or e-mail deverett@oshtemo.org with any questions you have regarding voter registration, polling locations or absentee ballots.

NOTICE TO PRECINCT 6 VOTERS

Summer Ridge Apartments has notified us they will no longer be hosting Precinct 6. We thank them for their years of service to the community as a voting location. Precinct 6 voters will now vote at West Kalamazoo Christian Church located at 454 South Drake Road just south of the Post Office. This is also the location for Precinct 5 and we thank them for their willingness to host another precinct! All voters in Precinct 6 were mailed a notice of the change of location and a new voter ID card in October as required by Michigan Election Law.



Safely Dispose of Unused or Expired Medications

The Red Med Box is a joint effort among law enforcement, the Kalamazoo Household Hazardous Waste Center, and other Community Partners. Residents are encouraged to NOT dispose of outdated or unneeded medications by pouring them down the drain, flushing them or throwing them in the garbage; these compounds eventually end up in our groundwater. There are several locations throughout the Kalamazoo area that accept these items—see the list below. Visit their website at redmedbox.com for more information.

The Red Med Box WILL accept:

- Expired & unused medications
- Over-the-counter medications
- Medication samples
- Pet medications
- Medicated ointments, lotions, drops
- Unopened Epi-pens
- Liquid medications

The Red Med Box will NOT accept:

- Sharps, needles, lancets
- Thermometers
- IV bags
- Bloody or infectious waste
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Business waste (nursing, group home, clinic)
- Personal care products (shampoo, lotion, cream)
- Empty containers
- Inhalers

Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety Portage Police Department
 150 E. Crosstown Pkwy. Suite A 7810 Shaver Rd.
 269.337.8101 269.329.4587
 M-F, 8-4 Every day, 24/7

Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office Schoolcraft Police Department
 1500 Lamont Ave. 442 N. Grand St./ US 131
 269.383.8821 269.679.5600
 M-F, 7-4 M-F, 8 – 4

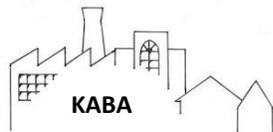
Kalamazoo Township Police Department WMU Public Safety
 1720 Riverview Dr. 511 Monroe St
 269.343.0551 269.387.5555
 M-F, 8-4:30 Every day, 24/7

Start the New Year off
SMART
 household hazardous **WASTE** RECYCLE it PROTECTS our EARTH!
RECYCLE IN 2016
 
 373-5211 • www.kalcounty.com/hhw

The HHW Center is located at 1301 Lamont Avenue, on the northwest corner of the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds. The Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center provides free disposal and recycling services for a wide variety of household chemicals and electronics. The service is FREE for Oshtemo Township residents. Visit their website or call for a complete list of accepted items. Hours are
 Tuesday & Friday 8am—1pm
 Wednesday noon to 6pm
 2nd Saturday 8am—noon (except Aug & Sept)

Construction/Remodeling Projects

The Kalamazoo Area Building Authority (KABA) provides permitting and inspection services to Oshtemo Township for building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing projects. Their office is located in the Oshtemo Township Hall—hours are 7 am—5 pm. Please visit kaba-mi.org or call 216.9643 for more information.



COME HANG A MITTEN ON THE MITTEN TREE!

The Oshtemo Branch Library and Oshtemo Grange are sponsoring a “Mitten Tree” collecting new mittens, hats, and scarves. Donations can be made at the Oshtemo Branch Library, 7265 West Main, until December 18th. Items will be donated to the Kalamazoo Deacons Conference.

- Library hours are:
 Mon: 10 am - 8 pm
 Tues: 12 pm - 8 pm
 Wed: 10 am - 6 pm
 Thurs: 10 am - 6 pm
 Fri: 10 am - 5 pm
 Sat: 10 am - 5 pm



OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Oshtemo Historical Society will not hold a meeting or program in the months of January and February in 2016. During these winters months it is often difficult for people to attend due to poor weather.

We encourage you to check our website for the notice of the program for March and for dates of Open House events at the Drake Homestead.

We wish you all a safe and joyous Holiday Season and look forward to seeing you at our meetings and events in 2016.



7275 West Main Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Ph 375.4260 Fax 375.7180
<http://www.oshtemo.org>

