

**From:** [Libby Heiny-Cogswell](#)  
**To:** [Dusty Farmer](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Difficult Times  
**Date:** Friday, April 10, 2020 9:34:09 PM

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For the folder.

**Elizabeth A. Heiny-Cogswell**

**Oshtemo Charter Township**

1000 Park Street  
25000  
PO Box 40000  
Oshtemo, WI 53150  
608.785.1130

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**From:** Wesley Tillett  
**Sent:** Friday, April 10, 2020 4:40 PM  
**To:** Libby Heiny-Cogswell <[libbyhc@oshtemo.org](mailto:libbyhc@oshtemo.org)>  
**Cc:** {

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**Subject:** Difficult Times

Libby, (cc: Admirals [elders] of Voyage Church),

Thank you and all your Staff for continuing to lead to the best of your ability during these historically unfortunate times.

I want to let you know that Voyage Church decided NOT to enter into the Oshtemo Residents Association and the lawsuit against the Township. For a variety of reasons, the leaders of Voyage sensed it is best to follow the mandate of the Township and connect to the city sewer by September.

We know there are many residents upset by and opposed to this mandate. However, the leaders of Voyage simply want to give the Township the benefit of the doubt on this point, be as amenable as possible, and not create more headache for you and your Staff. For many years Voyage Church has enjoyed the partnership with the Township to bless this community and we hope this partnership continues and is strengthened for many years to come.

May God give you clarity and courage, Libby. Peace and blessings to you!

-Wes Tillett

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**From:** [Libby Heiny-Cogswell](#)  
**To:** [Dusty Farmer](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Sewers  
**Date:** Friday, April 10, 2020 8:52:06 PM

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For the folder. Are you getting others?

Sent from [Outlook Mobile](#)

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**From:** Nancy Calloway  
**Sent:** Friday, April 10, 2020 8:04:25 PM  
**To:** Libby Heiny-Cogswell <[libbyhc@oshtemo.org](mailto:libbyhc@oshtemo.org)>  
**Subject:** Sewers

Dear Libby,

As the whole world was going into lockdown, I was astonished to receive the "packet" about Phase 2 of the sewer project - apparently your last official act before shutting down township offices!!! In a time of national crisis, a global pandemic and economic meltdown it is inconceivable to me that our local government is pressing ahead with this unpopular project and piling on. Without either the approval or consent of the homeowners you expect (no, require) to pay for it, this scheme already represented significant financial hardship not just to some but to all unlucky enough to be in it's path. A process to beg for charity in no way addresses the staggering cost to everyone or the unfairness of singling out some for arbitrarily "reduced" rates.

With this extended stay at home order, with so many people losing jobs, income, businesses and savings, with the threat of serious illness and the likelihood of a frightening number of deaths, surely the Township has better and more important things to do than add to these burdens crushing debt and the worry of losing our homes!!! For many of us these homes where we may "shelter in place" are the only real security we have. Extending the sewers may be a desirable goal in the long run... but in these times (as was already true for many of us) it is a luxury we cannot afford. I read on MLive today that the Residents Association has threatened to sue and that the cost of this project before a single foot has been dug has already increased by 15%. Litigation and cost overruns and more loans? At a time when people are struggling to survive? That is should be necessary to hire attorneys to get our township officials to listen to us and to have some say in how and for what we are taxed is surely not how local government is supposed to work.

I attended one of those board meetings where our elected officials seemed indifferent to the stories of people (with working septic systems already in place and paid for) who do not need and truly cannot afford this. Officials refused to answer questions and pushed this further down the road with the promise of neighborhood meetings (that did not happen) and something that would eventually come in the mail (not until months later when construction was about to begin and on the eve of the pandemic.) I also attended the Residents Association meeting. There was already significant opposition to the project, to the way it was handled (without a vote) and to the enormous cost to a few hundred families which far exceeds the actual cost of laying a few feet of pipe past our homes. The additional cost of the mandatory hookups made this even more of a hardship. Before million dollar loans were taken out in our names and with the threat of liens against our properties to pay them, we should have had the opportunity to vote on this, to opt out, to have our input considered, to negotiate and approve the financial terms under which such a project could occur. At a time when everything is precarious and uncertain and economic recovery (if it comes in our lifetime) seems far distant,

no one should have this hanging over their heads. I strongly urge you to scrap this project or to put it

on indefinite hold until times improve.

What was already unaffordable in better times is infinitely more impossible now. We will all need whatever we have left just to keep going.

I am far more interested in what our local government can do to support our fellow citizens in these difficult times... Are we testing for corona virus? Providing assistance and protection to the most vulnerable? Ensuring essential business and services can be conducted? Protecting our first responders and essential workers? And making sure elections can be held safely? Our priority should be helping each other get through this alive. And making recovery possible. Not making things even more difficult. Sewers are far down the list of what is important now.

PLEASE take this off the agenda. And find a way to finance it that will not ruin individual families before taking it up again.

Whatever resources we have should be directed toward surviving these twin catastrophes - both medical and financial.

We all have more important things to do.

Nancy Caloway

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**From:** [Libby Heiny-Cogswell](#)  
**To:** [Dusty Farmer](#)  
**Subject:** FW: sewer  
**Date:** Friday, April 10, 2020 4:28:27 PM

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Dusty,

I replied to Beth and am aiming to speak with her. This is for the Public Comment folder.

**Elizabeth A. Heiny-Cogswell**

511ppw@oshtemo.org

**Oshtemo Charter Township**

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**From:** Beth Luppe [redacted]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 10, 2020 4:04 PM  
**To:** Libby Heiny-Cogswell <libbyhc@oshtemo.org>  
**Subject:** sewer

Hi Libby, I hope you and your family are well. This is a terribly uncertain time for all of us.

I am writing to ask if in light of the virus any of these plans for upheaval will be delayed. I called the Township the day I received this packet and left a message asking you to call. The woman I spoke to seemed quite reluctant to pass on any information, so maybe you never received my message.

I read where I was mailed some type of notification about this process in October 2019. Neither Scott nor I recall reading anything like this. Since we receive almost no mail any more it seems unlikely that we would have dismissed it or ignored it. Is

a verification of this mailing available? A year's warning is not enough for upheaval of this degree.

Since I recently had my septic updated at considerable cost, and positioned improvements to do the least harm to my environment, I am disinterested in any conversations about how these mandated changes will improve my life. I do not need a new system, I do not want a new road and I do not believe that a system that has been working for 32 years with only one internal correction ( involving no raw sewage anywhere) in all of those years "is a public health concern."

I have to wonder at this timing. There is all kinds of construction going on around us bringing in millions of dollars for the township. We will soon be another Portage. The entire area around this neighborhood must be affected in unseen ways. How is this surge in construction changing our lives as residents.

We have lived her for 21 years. We do not want to move. I do not want what you say will improve my life.

We worked so very hard on the truck ordinances. A compromised was reached. But that pitted our neighborhood against big business. I do not want to be at odds with you or the township board! In fact, I have trusted that you and the Board have been looking out for my best interests. But this mandate feels truly unbelievable to me. I don't want it, and I

cannot for the life of me understand how you can wreck my little piece of earth and make me pay thousands for it as well.

I am asking for a delay in this time of already huge economic hardship; Because of the virus, I am no longer working and have no clear path ahead. My husband's practice is diminished; we have less money coming in than we have had in years.

I look forward to hearing from you. My heart is so heavy right now with my entire aging family's health at risk. My sister is caring for my mother in hospice alone in my parent's home. We cannot relieve her because of the virus and no hospice staff enter the home. My eldest aunt is already diagnosed with the virus and in isolation in a small nursing home in Anderson, IN which is making the news because 11 people have already died and three staff are in the hospital in critical condition. Please bring us all some relief in the form of a hold on this project until there is some relief for all of us during this unprecedented, global tragedy!

Beth Luppe  
6320 Torrington

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**From:** [Oshtemo Township](#)  
**To:** [Dusty Farmer](#)  
**Subject:** OshtemoTownship: Contact Form [#914]  
**Date:** Friday, April 10, 2020 7:49:12 AM

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Name \* Timothy Miller

How would you prefer we contact you? Email

\*

Email

Comments \*

We were all order to stay home stay safe. Yet Oshtemo Township is going to continue to do business by Zoom. Public meeting that needs the public citizens , tax payers input for approval. Yet we can't leave our home to conduct the business we need to do and get the signatures to oppose the Township actions. Not all citizens handle business on computers. The Township is pasting development that have been brought to are attention after the have been planning for 2 years. That as Private property owners we wouldn't approve of. Now Oshtemo Township will be aloud to continue business at are disadvantage. Passing development we clearly don't approve of. You stated there wouldn't be any spending but for emergency for covid 19. Township applying for grants from department of natural resources doesn't come close to a emergency. I'm Asking that all Township put business on hold and applying for Grant's put on hold until further notice. Thank you Timothy Miller

**From:** [Oshtemo Township](#)  
**To:** [Dusty Farmer](#)  
**Subject:** OshtemoTownship: Contact Form [#892]  
**Date:** Monday, March 23, 2020 9:47:43 AM

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Name \* Dan Wilkinson

How would you prefer we contact you? Email

Email



Comments \*

reading your news letter about the much talked about sewer hookups. first what is wrong with septic tanks they have worked fine for hundred of years. its not the public's fault that your zoning dept let so many homes be built on so small lots that causes this problem. if you really want to help the people why do you need to add 1 or 2 percent to there hookup bill just more money for you to squander. last the worst part of any public hookup is then they control what your bill is with no limits just like the city water we all had to hook up to because of your leaking land fill. my water bill keeps costing more with no more water use the same water meter they put in my home 18 years ago keeps costing more and i can't just buy it to stop the bleeding. retired people can't afford this continual waste of money. just because you have a job don't think you have to work quite spending our money



**From:** [Libby HC](#)  
**To:** [Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Sewer system packet  
**Date:** Thursday, March 19, 2020 3:57:09 PM

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Dusty,  
Public Comment for the 3-24 meeting.  
Libby

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Kathryn Steadman**  
**Date:** Thu, Mar 19, 2020 at 12:56 PM  
**Subject:** Sewer system packet  
**To:** OSH Twp--Libby Heiny-Cogswell <[libby.hc@gmail.com](mailto:libby.hc@gmail.com)>

Hi Libby,

I received my Phase 2 packet of sewer materials on Monday. Although I, like everyone else in the affected area, am not particularly thrilled with the cost, I do realize the need for the future and thought the packet of materials was very clear and thorough. I hope all of the detractors thoughtfully read all of the packet materials and abandon their completely selfish activities. Hang in there . I think many others think like I do and care about future generations.

Share with your team if you like,  
Katy Steadman

April 6, 2020

Dear Oshtemo Township Leadership:

I wanted to express my perspective as a proponent of the public sanitary sewer project and encourage the Board to commit to moving the project forward. Unfortunately, I have left the board meetings before speaking during the comment periods feeling very uncomfortable about my physical and property safety if I were to share my opinion/name/address. I respect the position you have voluntarily put yourselves into as elected officials and the tough decisions you all are facing on this project and others.

We bought our home in Westport in January 2019 and couldn't be happier. We have numerous young family friends that *want* to move to Westport and there are hardly enough options on the market! We love the neighborhood, the local businesses, the regional proximity, the growth and the Kalamazoo Promise opportunity. As others have suggested, I have no concerns of our property values dropping from improving our streets and adding public sewer.

We knew of the project and not by disclosure from the sellers or realtor but by the information provided on the website and others in the area. There is a great deal of information and explanation about fees, construction and process and it is tedious to go through and completely understand. I was able to find everything I needed by using the FAQs, tax maps on the county website, and updates in the newsletters. I attend numerous council meetings for local and neighboring municipalities and will commend the township for broadcasting live their public meetings. This is not a common practice and shows the commitment to sharing information and providing access on multiple mediums.

Our current sewer outlet from our home, exits about halfway up (five feet from the ground) the basement wall to our septic in the back corner of our lot. We currently have our washing machine set up in our basement, and it drains to a utility sink where it holds until it reaches a set level then is pumped to our outlet. It is a constant maintenance item in our home and causes stagnant water, leaving mold and odor in our home. When we bought our home, we anticipated this project and the opportunity to eliminate the health safety concern of the mold collection and potential for pump maintenance or failure. The project will also allow us to add a bathroom in our basement to add value and convenience. It was actually a selling point to us that we would be able to do this work in conjunction with the project!

I am a Civil Engineer, so I have a technical background in municipal utilities and sewer systems and how they are installed, funded and operate. It is a significant investment to build infrastructure and even after the upfront capital costs, there are legacy costs that will never be paid off. In my personal and professional opinion, I believe that the Township has done its due diligence in looking at various ways to offer financing, leverage federal funding assistance, and designed the project to include economy of scales benefits and other improvements that can also contribute to the payment of the projects.

I also believe that public infrastructure, particularly sanitary sewer, is a significant benefit to the environment and health of residents. For example, with water levels rising across the state, officials and professionals are concerned of the impact to septic drain fields and water quality. The timing of this project is crucial to mitigate these risks and address the effects of the current and projected water level issues that we are facing above and below grade. This project opportunity is strategic and forward thinking to provide quality and proactive measures to help the residents in Oshtemo.

In conjunction with this project, I would like to suggest that during the road resurfacing speed tables or some physical speed reduction measures are considered in Westport. I understand there are some inconveniences for maintenance by the Road Commission, but I think some option needs to be offered than as a compromise. Enforcement by police never seems to be a sustainable or resourceful option and a physical deterrent could address this issue long term.

I thank you for your attention and service. I look forward to making Oshtemo my home for many years to come. Your staff has been responsive, helpful and friendly in all matters and responses I have received from them (sewer related and otherwise).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Horner". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Anna Horner, P.E.

6358 Torrington Road

Kalamazoo, MI 49009