

**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SEWER, TURN TO PAGE 2**



# NEWSLETTER

*To advance the quality of life of all residents through a commitment to responsible growth, and value-driven municipal services that promote the relationships among economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity.*  
(Adopted 2/14/2017)

## TOWNSHIP BOARD

**Supervisor**  
Libby Heiny-Cogswell  
libbyhc@oshtemo.org

**Clerk**  
Dusty Farmer  
dfarmer@oshtemo.org

**Treasurer**  
Grant Taylor  
gtaylor@oshtemo.org

**Trustees**  
Cheri Bell  
cbell@oshtemo.org

Deb Everett  
deverett@oshtemo.org

Zak Ford  
zford@oshtemo.org

Ken Hudok  
khudok@oshtemo.org

**2020 Dump Days**  
**Proof of Residency Required**

**Township Hall**  
7275 West Main St.  
9 AM- 3 PM

**March 28th**  
**April 11**  
**April 25**  
**May 9**  
**May 30**  
**June 27**  
**Aug 29**  
**Sep 26**  
**Oct 31**

**Nov 7 Leaf Drop off**  
**Nov 21 Trash and Leaf**

**Shred Days 10AM-12PM:**  
**May 23 and Sep 19**

## CENSUS 2020 UPDATE

The federal government conducts a census of the entire population to count everyone in the United States and record basic information about them every decade. In 2020, for the first time ever, the U.S. Census Bureau will accept responses online and by phone, but you can still respond by mail if you prefer. Strict federal law protects your census responses. It is against the law for any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census information that identifies an individual or business. Census Bureau employees take a lifelong pledge of confidentiality to handle data responsibly and keep respondents' information private. The penalty for wrongful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up

to 5 years, or both. No law enforcement agency (not the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Federal Bureau of Investigation, or any other agency) can access or use your personal information at any time. Data collected can only be used for statistical purposes that help inform important decisions, including how much federal funding your community receives. The Census Bureau will never ask for your Social Security number, bank or credit card account numbers, money or donations, or anything on behalf of a political party. To make sure you and your community are counted, learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting <https://www.2020census.gov/>



## Township Department Information

Assessor Kristine Biddle  
216-5225 assessor@oshtemo.org

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

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

Parks Director Karen High  
216-5233 khigh@oshtemo.org (Rentals: 375-4260)

Planning Director Iris Lubbert  
216-5223 ilubbert@oshtemo.org

Public Works Director Marc Elliott  
216-5236 mellriott@oshtemo.org



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From Clerk Dusty Farmer—

As the Certified Election Administrator in Oshtemo, along with my fantastic Election Specialist Amanda McMillon and Elections Assistant Cheryl Moeslein, we are proud to announce that we registered 653 voters since Jan 1, 2020, 74 of those on Election Day. We processed over 2500 absentee ballots on Election Day, and over 3300 ballots at the polls.

**The status of the May election is currently under review, and the directive from the Secretary of State is to have a fully absentee ballot election, with no polls open. If the entities with items on the ballot choose to move their questions to August, then we will not have a May election at all. To sign up on the permanent absentee voting list, please call 216-5224, or email clerk@oshtemo.org or sign up through our website.**

There is another important deadline before that date. April 21, 2020 is the deadline for potential Township Board candidates to file for the August Primary Election. With the office currently closed to the public, I want to make sure people know that we are still open by appointment, and candidate paperwork can also be left in the drop box, which is checked multiple times per day. Most of our staff is working remotely, but I am still in the office each day to maintain operations. If you have any questions, please call us at 269-216-5224.



From Treasurer Grant Taylor—

With my first year as Treasurer now complete, I take pride in looking back at the achievements of my office. We have taken each new task head-on and focused on serving the people of Oshtemo. Our success in operating and collecting the tax roll for the Township is a good example of that service. I am excited to have a full tax season behind me when I settle the tax roll with the County in March.

I look forward to the challenge of creating a process for tracking sewer mortgages through our software program. This will allow residents to take advantage of the low interest financing offered by the Township. It is the duty of the Township Board to help accommodate the needs of our citizens when faced with the large costs for sewer, and I am ready to work hard to assist residents.

I will be attending my third and final year of Treasurer's Institute this April. After being elected by my peers last year, I am energized to serve as the President of my graduating class. I am also excited to receive my municipal Treasurer's certification (MiCPT), which is accredited through Michigan State University.



From Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell—

Have you been hearing about the big sewer improvements the Township is undertaking starting this year but aren't clear whether you are impacted? I am devoting this column to the upcoming 2020 and 2021 sewer projects because of the need to correct inaccuracies on many social media sites. Please understand that the sewer projects will impact only a percentage of township property owners. These projects don't affect you if you are connected to public sewer, as that connection cost was either included in the price of your home when it was built, or you or a former owner paid for the cost of connection necessitated by septic tank failure or a mortgage lender requiring the connection.

Lack of public sewers is not a new problem, but rather one that has grown over the decades. It is no longer prudent to delay action or to connect properties on a case by case basis because costly septic failures are occurring, and systems are aging and reaching the end of their useful life. Property owners as well as the township will save on costs by connecting entire neighborhoods. Neighborhoods involved in the 2020 and 2021 projects, with the exception of properties already connected to public sewer there, include for USDA Phase 1 2020-- Fairlane, Sunset/Meridian, West Main/North 7<sup>th</sup>, Beech, Whitegate, and Skyridge, and for USDA Phase 2 2021 vision-- Country Club Village, Westport (south of H Avenue), O'Park, South 11<sup>th</sup> St, and West KL Ave.

The Township began studying the developed neighborhoods, and whether there was a need for neighborhood sewer improvements beginning about 2011 following resident requests. Multiple elected boards spent time evaluating both the need and options in order to undertake such a huge project. All along the way information was publicly available to the community. Property owners within the project area are being informed of what is happening and why. The Township is working hard to develop this vital infrastructure utilizing the most cost effective construction solutions, while at the same time finding means to offer property owners the lowest cost loans to lessen the burden of connecting their property to the sewer line under a brand new road. Some of the actions taken (or considered) by the Township Board include:

- Securing USDA Rural Development Program funds. (The USDA reviews and audits all aspects of the project from inception to completion, from design to tracking financials.)
- Offering low interest rates based on the USDA rate plus 1%, rather than the national prime lending rate plus 1 or 2% as was past practice.
- Identifying residents who need assistance, in order to discuss other financial options.

For detailed information about the sewer projects go to the official township website at oshtemo.org where you will see a tab for SEWER EXPANSION. Under that tab is a wealth of information, including FAQs, funding, connection fees, payment options, and more.

# Are you ready for REAL ID?



Need a safe place to exchange online purchases?



The Township Hall is safe and secure and open M-Thur 8am-5pm and Fri 8am-1pm

Here's what you need to do to get a REAL ID:

When the Secretary of State returns to normal hours and operations, make and appointment and:

Bring your driver's license or state identification card

Bring your certified birth certificate, with a raised seal or stamp issued by a governmental agency; your valid, unexpired U.S. passport; or an approved citizenship or legal presence document. (Faxes and photocopies won't be accepted.)

If your name differs from what is on your birth certificate, bring certified documents for every time your name has changed, such as marriage licenses or court orders.

There's no additional fee to turn a license or state ID card into a standard REAL ID if it's done during your normal renewal time; otherwise a duplicate card fee of \$9 or \$10 will be charged.

For more information, visit [Michigan.gov/RealID](http://Michigan.gov/RealID).

## Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight outages can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by calling: 800-477-5050

CONNECT TO ROAD COMMISSION OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY ALERTS



### Have You Signed Up?

Receive Message Alerts for:

- ◆ Road Construction
- ◆ Road Closures/Detours
- ◆ General Public News

RCKC CONNECT  
RCKC ALERTS SIGN UP NOW

Visit : [www.kalamazooountyroads.com](http://www.kalamazooountyroads.com)

## Extending a giant *Thank You* to Oshtemo Friends of the Parks volunteers!

Volunteers are making our wonderful parks even better! They root out invasive vegetation, clear new trails, pick up litter, nurture our fledging rain gardens, plant native wildflowers, and host fun community events like 'Music in the Park'. We're pleased to announce that in 2019, over 300 volunteer hours were contributed to Oshtemo's parks. Please help us thank the following individuals and organizations for their hard work and generosity:

Amanda Bobalik

Belinda Cygan

Bill Hogan

Boy Scout Troop 292

Bruce Dannenhauer

Carolyn Kennedy

Charlie Livingston

Chris Lawson

Cub Scout Pack 247

Dan Befus

Daniel Lehto

Dave Walch

Deb Beyer

Denny Patzer

Derek Nofz

Eric Livingston

Fleis & VanDenBrink staff

Gina Jones

Jeff Fleming

Joe Novarra

Kalamazoo Youth Advancement Academy

Karen Halsted

Kelly Burt

Mary Ann Heffernan

Megan Osetek

Pam & Mark Jackson

Pam Sotherland

Paul Sotherland

Shari Wykrent

Shelley Metz

Starr Waldron

Tomme Maile



Oshtemo  
Friends of the Parks



# Parks

**Check out this FREE upcoming workshop co-sponsored by Oshtemo Friends of the Parks!**

**(PENDING POSSIBLE CANCELLATION DUE TO COVID-19 CONCERNS)**

## **Tree Planting, Care, & Maintenance**

The Carriage Barn at Drake Farmstead Park, 927 North Drake Rd. Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Saturday April 4, 2020 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Planting and caring for trees can be a challenge. Join us to discuss the best practices for tree planting and maintenance. Topics include: selecting the right type of tree for each site, soil preparation, planting, watering, and basic pruning techniques. This workshop takes place inside and outside. Dress for the weather and muddy conditions. RSVP to the Kalamazoo Conservation District (KCD) at [www.kalamazooconservation.org](http://www.kalamazooconservation.org) or 269-775-3368.

Sponsored by the DNR, Urban and Community Forestry Program and the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry Program and Oshtemo Friends of the Parks.



# Fire Department

## OFD as a State certified EMS training Center.

Recently Oshtemo Fire Department elected to become a certified EMS Continuing Education provider through the State of Michigan's Bureau of EMS, Trauma & Preparedness. This program will allow us to conduct EMS continuing education for our licensed members without having to send them to other agencies. Previously we relied on the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety and Portage Department of Public Safety to furnish the continuing education required to maintain individual medical licenses.

The application process required us to create a review board consisting of health care professionals from inside and outside of the organization. They also needed to develop the lesson plans for each credit that will be issued. The in-depth 89-page application took over 120 staff hours to complete. The final step was the State of Michigan's physical inspection of our facilities, documentation process and training equipment (mannequins, tools & expendable supplies). The review lasted approximately four hours with Oshtemo Fire and Rescue passing on the first attempt with no discrepancies.

## POC Recruitment efforts.

Our annual 2019 community recruitment for paid on-call members started in August with 35 applicants. This multi-step process is designed to identify those who will serve our community with distinction and flourish in this profession with a full understanding of its myriad of demands.

- Attend orientation briefing.
- Ride along with on-duty crews for familiarization.
- Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT).
- Formal application submittal.
- Panel interview.
- Conditional offer of employment.
- Background investigation.
- Driving record check.
- Entry level medical physical.

# Assistance Programs and Resources:

## Assistance for paying heating and utility bills

**The Salvation Army:** The office is located at 1700 S. Burdick St., Kalamazoo, MI 49001, and they can provide energy bill help as well as they offer other programs. Get free food, clothing and holiday assistance as well. In most cases, a referral from DHS is needed.

The organization also has a thrift store (for clothing including school supplies), an emergency food pantry, and Pathways of Hope for long term advice. Call (269) 344-6119.

**Kalamazoo Deacons Conference:** Qualified residents can receive anywhere from \$75 to \$100 for their bills every 18 to 24 months on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit the Kalamazoo Deacons Conference, 1010 N. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007 to apply or learn more. Phone number (269) 344-7333.

**Rent assistance programs** - Residents of Kalamazoo Michigan have several different non-profit organizations and charities that they can call and apply at for emergency rental assistance. Priority is usually given to families with children, senior citizens, and the disabled, however anyone can ask for help.

## Housing Assistance Programs

**Housing Resources Inc.** is an agency that provides a variety of services to people facing eviction, as well as those who are currently homeless. They do have limited financial assistance and grants they can offer, but most of the aid they can offer is by referring people to government programs. Clients can be linked to programs for paying a security deposit, or maybe receive a short term loan for their rental expenses. The goal of Housing Resources is on rehousing the homeless and even preventing it in the first place.

Some of the other services from HRI include providing counseling, directing people to charities with funding, assist with foreclosure prevention tactics, and other similar types of support. You can call the agency at 269-382-0287.

## Free medical care for uninsured and low income

Appropriately named the **Free Clinic of Kalamazoo** (344-0044) provides free medical services for the uninsured. They offer prescription assistance, acute care, general checkups, dental screening, and access to several other health care programs.

**Family Health Center Emergency Prescription Assistance Program** (488-0813) provides emergency prescription medications (only once per year) to people who do not have this as part of their insurance plan or who can't afford their medications.

Additional centers provide medical care and savings to the underserved. Low income patients, senior citizens, disabled, and others may all stop by for advice and health services.



## OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Visit our website for more information.  
[www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org)

We invite you to join us to learn about local history. Our programs are free and you do not need to be a member to attend. We meet at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 W. Main St, unless otherwise stated.

Mark your calendar for the following:

**NOTE: PROGRAMS MAY BE CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 CONCERNS.**

**April 16**—TBA check our website for future information

**May 21**—**Keith Howard**, from the Kalamazoo Public Library, will present information about *Postcard Collecting—Kalamazoo and Beyond*.

7275 West Main Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
Ph 375.4260 Fax 375.7180  
[www.oshtemo.org](http://www.oshtemo.org)

