



charter township

oshtemo NEWSLETTER!

est. 1839

December 2014

How to contact your Oshtemo Township Officials

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Treasurer Nancy Culp 216-5221 ncoshtwp@oshtemo.org

Trustee Nancy Carr 271-4359 nancycarr@pprmi.com

Trustee Dusty Farmer 251-5832 dfarmer@oshtemo.org

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

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Assessor Cathy Harrell 216-5225 choshtwp@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

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)

Have a safe & happy holiday season!

We will be CLOSED

December 24, 25 & 26—Christmas

January 1 & 2—New Years

January 19—Martin Luther King Day

February 16—Presidents Day

2014 Winter Tax Information from the Treasurer's Office

Winter tax notices were mailed December 1st. If you received a tax bill but have an escrow with your mortgage company, remind them they must request the bill each tax season; forward the bill to them. If your mortgage company requested the tax bill, you will not receive a copy, but may contact us and we will be glad to send you one. Taxes can be verified paid by contacting us or checking our website www.oshtemo.org which is updated daily.

Credit card payments are accepted at the Township Office; there is a 3% fee for this service. Tax bills can also be paid on line; visit our web site for information on this option. If your tax bill has a note that says "SUMMER TAX BILL DUE" please contact our office for the payoff amount as interest accrues monthly.

Please note Township Office hours. We do have a drop box in the parking lot, which is checked daily.

February 17—Winter taxes due without penalty. Postmarks of February 17 will be accepted but **MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 23, 2015 WITH NO EXCEPTIONS!**

February 18 to March 2—Winter taxes will be assessed a 3% late fee. If payments are received in our office between February 18 and March 2 without the interest included, we will receipt the taxes and bill you for the interest owed.

March 3—all unpaid summer and winter taxes are turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer's Office and must be paid there.



BLOOD DRIVE NEWS

Wednesday, December 17—11 am—6 pm

**Come in for a hot bowl of soup and
a chance to win a \$25 gift card!**

February 25—11 am—6 pm

October winner was Gabe Washo

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.



CHRISTMAS TREE DROP OFF

Handley's Tree Service

8342 West Main

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

HEALTH INSURANCE ENROLLMENT ASSISTANCE

A coalition of health and social service agencies will be offering free information and one-on-one assistance with enrollment for health care plans through the Affordable Care Act. Several Kalamazoo County organizations have teamed up to help people navigate through the enrollment process. Counselors will be available in Oshtemo:

Oshtemo Community Center, 6407 Parkview Avenue
December 3rd—2pm to 6pm **January 7th—2pm to 6 pm**
No appointment is necessary

Attendees will need to provide a social security number or document number for immigrants, estimated income information for 2015 and policy numbers for any current health insurance plan they may already have.

Open enrollment is November 15, 2014 to February 15, 2015

Re-enrollment/update coverage deadline is December 15, 2014

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

For other dates, times, and locations, contact Enroll Kalamazoo by calling (269) 341-6104, or visit enrollkalamazoo.com or Facebook, at [facebook.com/enroll.kalamazoo](https://www.facebook.com/enroll.kalamazoo).

From the Supervisor.....The Township Board worked on the 2015 budget during five public meetings starting in August. For these meetings and Board discussions, the Supervisor and department heads presented a look back at respective department 2013 accomplishments, current year goals, and outlined requested 2015 work efforts. Projected information was developed and conveyed on revenues, capital items, and other specific department, financial consulting, buildings and grounds, police protection, and general township operations. The 2015 budget, adopted at the November 18th public hearing, reflects this series of Board discussions and analysis. It is available for public review both in hard copy at the Township office and online at the Township website.

Highlights of the 2015 budget:

The budget builds upon our Township's significant accomplishments and service provision to our businesses and residents. The overall budget is 21% higher than 2014, largely due to use of \$1.4 million of savings for major capital projects. There was no change to the Township property tax rate; no change to the special assessment district rate of 2.5 for provision of fire protection; reduction of the special assessment district rates to .5 and 2.5 for contracted police protection; no change to the streetlight assessment district rate of .3; and no change to the rate of .1 for the assessing administration fee.

The budget includes use of \$600,000 of the General Fund Balance to construct the next major sanitary sewer planned capital improvement project. The sanitary main will be constructed under North 10th Street, extending south from H Avenue to north of Litchfield Lane. Along with the sanitary project, in the interest of construction cost efficiency, the budget includes provision for the construction of a sidewalk or path when the sewer line is built. Detailed contract documents consultant work is under way, working in accordance with the Township Non-motorized Plan.

Funding for the construction for Flesher Field Park Master Plan Phase II includes a significant \$300,000 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. Construction completion is expected in the late spring or early summer. Park rental fees continue to increase, given the popularity of the Township Park for pavilion reservations. A challenge for 2015 is to secure funding grants, partners, and donations for improvements to the Grange Hall to make the facility barrier free.

The budget continues the longstanding Township practice of fiscal prudence and use of multi-year savings to construct major capital projects for public health and safety, and for quality of life improvements, without the need to borrow. This is a positive message to the residents and businesses currently in the Township. The Board is carefully receiving, managing, and using tax and assessment revenues. This is an important message for those considering locating in Oshtemo to live, work, and recreate. The budget reflects strategic planning to efficiently and cost effectively accomplish important quality of life, health, safety, and welfare objectives.

The budget includes a 1.5% cost of living increase for staff and full time elected officials, and a potential 1% additional performance increase. The cost of health insurance will increase by 8.4%, of which employees pay 20%. A slight increase to the defined contribution health savings plan is proposed, in order to stay current with increased cost of Medicare insurance, and based on the model to provide 80% of the cost of supplemental Medicare insurance for current employees, and 100% of the cost of Medicare supplemental policies for five “grandfathered” retirees.

The Township continues to accomplish much with a relatively small full time staff of eighteen, eight permanent part time office and maintenance staff, approximately 35 part time firefighters, and two seasonal grounds employees. This demonstrates the efficient Township governance model. Given this relatively small staff number for a community of 22,000, professional staff shoulder broad roles requiring flexibility; this ultimately provides an efficient, cost-effective work force. The budget proposes some increases in staffing to assist with the increased demands of new development currently experienced. The Fire Department operations fund budget reflects a shift in part time fire station staffing. The proposal is to increase the number of scheduled part time shifts at Stations 1 and 2.

Additional and significant dollars will be used to plan and construct non-motorized facilities in alignment with the adopted non-motorized plan. For 2015, this includes all or parts of the following-- North 10th Street, South Drake Road, and KL Avenue. Per Board directive, Supervisor and staff will continue to explore grant and alternative funding sources and partners.

Technology improvements include upgrades to the system of electronic off site back up and continuing conversion of paper records to electronic.

Other proposed items of note in the budget include the proposed expansion of Genesee Prairie Cemetery, \$200,000 of Township contribution to the Kalamazoo County Road Commission for maintenance of local streets through their PAR fund program; sanitary sewer design for identified next priority capital projects, including North 6th Street and KL Avenue sewer; and Drake Farmstead market study and master plan development. The Fire Department proposes to replace 1972 and 1992 brush fire trucks, add a command vehicle, implement Station 2 & 3 maintenance improvements, and conduct a Station 1 facility evaluation.

The Oshtemo Downtown Development Authority proposes to make visual, temporary improvements to their newly acquired property at the northwest corner of South 9th Street and Stadium Drive; to develop a small grants/loan program for business development in the DDA; and to work on Streetscape Design Development plans.

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



FIREFIGHTERS HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

Oshtemo firefighters will be participating in the annual holiday food drive.

Saturday, December 13th
Wal-Mart on 9th Street
10 am to 2 pm

All donations will be delivered to Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes for distribution to area needy families. In conjunction with the Fire Department’s efforts, a donation bin is also available at the Township Office.

Holiday
FOOD DRIVE

KALAMAZOO COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Snow removal priorities:

- Snow route roads*
- Balance of primary roads*
- Local roads*
- Subdivision/plat streets*
- Dead-end & cul-de-sacs*

REMINDER: State Law prohibits pushing snow and ice onto, or across roadways and requires safety vision for motorists not be obstructed. The complete winter maintenance policy is available at kcrc-roads.com — click on the Maintenance tab or call 381.3171.



2014 Election Update

May Election	Township wide turnout was 10%	Precinct 3 highest at 21% & Precinct 5 lowest at 4%
August Primary	Township wide turnout was 15%	Precinct 3 highest at 23% & Precinct 5 lowest at 5%
November General	Township wide turnout was 44%	Precincts 1 & 2 highest at 62% & Precinct 5 lowest at 22%

Dates to Remember -

May 5, 2015 will be the next scheduled election—details of ballot issues will be provided in the March newsletter.

Thank you to our dedicated election inspectors and those locations who host our polling places; their contribution to the election process is a much appreciated service to our community:

Precinct 3—Peoples Church
Precinct 4 & 7—Voyage Church
Precinct 5—West Kalamazoo Christian Church
Precinct 6—Summer Ridge Apts
Precinct 9—Oshtemo Branch Library
Precinct 10—Oshtemo United Methodist Church
Precincts 1, 2 & 8 use the Township Hall, Fire Station No. 2 and the Oshtemo Community Center respectively.



New Trustee

As a result of the November election, Grant Taylor will be joining the Township Board as Trustee. He served on the Oshtemo Downtown Development Authority prior to his election. Trustee Dave Bushouse is leaving the Board after serving 18 years. We thank Dave for his many years of dedication to this community and its residents.

FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.....

Draft Zoning Ordinance amendments have been approved by the Planning Commission and have been presented to the Township Board with final reading to be held on December 9th. They will implement the West Main Street and 9th Street Sub-Area Plans allowing for greater flexibility in terms of the use of properties within these designated areas consistent with the vision presented in these plans. In addition, the Planned Unit Development regulations are also proposed for amendment to make greater use of this development tool. Information is available on our website Notice Board at www.oshtemo.org

Construction of the Costco store is completed and coordination continues with the property owner regarding the balance of the 24 acre development.

MDOT completed their improvements to Stadium Drive and Drake Road, and the Township will continue to work closely with MDOT as they prepare for replacement of the Stadium Drive / US-131 interchange beginning spring 2015.

Simultaneous work by the City of Kalamazoo and KCRC to improve North Drake Road from West Main Street to Ravine Road is nearly complete, including providing a variety of non-motorized facilities connecting pedestrians and bicyclists from the apartments and neighborhoods along this corridor to the KVRT, educational facilities, and adjacent commercial centers.

Initial design work is being completed to assess feasibility of constructing non-motorized facilities along 10th Street and KL Avenue in conjunction with upcoming capital projects scheduled to occur on these roadways in the near future. Such facilities are identified in the Township's Non-Motorized Plan, and installation in conjunction with already scheduled projects would be most cost effective. The plan map is available on our website under the "About Oshtemo" link on the home pages, then "Maps/Directions".

The DDA completed demolition of the former Citgo Station at the northwest corner of 9th Street and Stadium Drive. The DDA will be working with a consultant in 2015 to fine-tune a Streetscape Design Plan for beautification of the area and development of public space at the corner site.

If you have questions or would like additional information please feel free to contact Greg Milliken, Planning Director, at 216-5223 or gmilliken@oshtemo.org.

PARK NEWS....

Township Park—the rain garden project was completed in October with help from numerous volunteers and spring will bring a colorful and useful addition to the park. Come cross country ski, snowshoe, or just take an invigorating walk on the trails through the picturesque winter scenery.

Flesher Field—Phase I has been completed and work on Phase II commenced with removal of the old playground equipment and initial excavation work. The contractor will continue to work during the winter months as weather allows to shorten the construction season in the spring. We are aiming for a grand opening in June, 2015 to introduce a new playground, a second picnic shelter, a new gazebo with garden space, and relocation of two wiffleball fields.

Grange Hall—construction documents have been completed to renovate this historic gem into a barrier free facility while retaining its historic character. Fund raising efforts including seeking grants, private donations, and partnerships with users, will be undertaken to accomplish this major project. A determination is expected in December on a pending grant application for a small playground; the required match was provided by private donations. If we are successful, the playground would be installed in the spring.

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

CONSIDER THE PARK ENDOWMENT FUND FOR YOUR HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING..... Need an idea for those hard to buy for folks on your gift giving list or a year end gift for tax purposes? Consider giving to the Oshtemo Township Parks and Recreation Endowment Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. It 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.



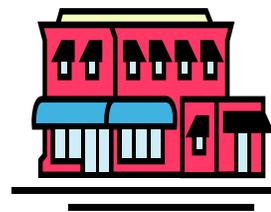
DID YOU KNOW????

- Your taxes are based on your **Taxable Value**.
- Your Taxable Value can **never** exceed your assessed value.
- The Taxable Value can only increase at the rate of inflation or 5%, whichever is lower.
- The State of Michigan determines how much taxable value increases each year.
- Annual changes in assessment are based on sales of property in similar type neighborhoods.
- It is **illegal** for the Assessor to set your new assessment solely based on your purchase price.
- Your property information is available on our website at www.oshtemo.org
- Our property **maps** are also available on our website.
- It is your responsibility as a taxpayer to review your **Assessment Change Notice** (comes out in February).
- The only time you can appeal your assessment is during the **March Board of Review**.
- It is your responsibility to file a **PRINCIPAL RESIDENT'S EXEMPTION AFFIDAVIT** if you qualify; the form only needs to be filed once.
- If you have a business in Oshtemo Township, and move out of the Township, you need to contact the Assessor's office.



IMPORTANT NEWS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Many small businesses are eligible to file for an exemption from Personal Property Taxes. An Affidavit will need to be filed with the Assessor's office. This is form 5076 and will be included with the Personal Property Statements. They are due back to the Assessor no later than **February 10**. The State of Michigan is NOT extending that date, so please file on time. Any forms received after February 10 **will pay the tax**.



OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

In lieu of our regular OHS speaker programs, the OHS, in cooperation with Oshtemo Township, will be hosting visioning sessions in January and February.

OHS members and the general public will be invited to meet with the OHS Board and Township Staff to share their ideas to help develop an overall vision for the Drake Farmstead property.

Now that Oshtemo Township owns all of the property fronting on Drake Road between Gordon Food Service and Croyden Avenue, and extending west past the Drake House, the OHS would like input from the community about the future of the Drake House and the surrounding property. What should the property, which is part of the Oshtemo Parks and Community Buildings system, look like in the next ten or twenty years? What should be its uses?

Help the Township and OHS develop ideas for the long range development of this agrarian gem in the midst of its urban setting. For the dates, times and details of these sessions, please visit,

www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org and www.oshtemo.org

March 19th, Mark Tomlonson, Treasurer of the Kalamazoo Model Railroad Historical Society, will present: ***The History of Michigan Railroads in Kalamazoo County, with an emphasis on Oshtemo Township***

We hope you can join us for this free program, which will be held at the Oshtemo Township Hall at 7:00 pm.



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<http://www.oshtemo.org>

