



charter township

oshtemo

NEWSLETTER

est. 1839

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)

July 2019

Oshtemo Township

Board of Trustees

Supervisor

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

Clerk

Dusty Farmer 216-5224
dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Treasurer

Grant Taylor 216-5221
gtaylor@oshtemo.org

Trustees

Cheri L. Bell 372-2275
cbell@oshtemo.org

Deb Everett 375-4260
deverett@oshtemo.org

Zak Ford 271-5513
zford@oshtemo.org

Ken Hudok 548-7002
khudok@oshtemo.org

Township Department Information

Assessor:

Kristine Biddle 216-5225 assessor@oshtemo.org

Fire Chief:

Mark Barnes 375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

Ordinance Enf:

Rick Suwarsky 216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org

Parks Director:

Karen High 216-5233 khigh@oshtemo.org

Rental Info 216-5224 oshtemo@oshtemo.org

Planning Director:

Julie Johnston 216-5223 jjohnston@oshtemo.org

Public Works:

Marc Elliott 216-5236 melliott@oshtemo.org

Township Customer Service Hours

Monday thru Thursday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Friday

8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

(1st Thurs of each month at 9 a.m.)

(269) 375-4260

We will be CLOSED

July 4 and 5 - Independence Day

Welcome New Front Office Staff to Oshtemo!



Cheryl Moeslein recently joined Oshtemo as the Treasurer and Clerk's Assistant. On June 27, 2019 she became the Deputy Treasurer in addition to her assistant roles. Born and raised in Kalamazoo, she recently moved back to the area from St. Joseph, where she worked for Edgewater Bank as an Executive Assistant/HR Officer. Other positions in banking, law offices, and schools have helped her develop skills that she will utilize in assisting the Township and its citizens.

Cheryl and her husband, Jeff, love spending time with their two sons and daughters-in-law, and their three grandchildren. They also enjoy playing golf and traveling - mostly to Michigan destinations. Be sure to introduce yourself when you see Cheryl at the front counter, especially during the upcoming tax season.

Welcome, Cheryl!

PROOF OF RESIDENCY REQUIRED FOR SERVICES



2019 Dump Day Schedule

Township Hall Parking Lot

7275 W. Main St. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Yard waste, kitchen garbage, dead animals, hazardous materials, or large quantities of building materials cannot be accepted.

July 27 August 31
September 28 October 26
November 23—LAST DAY

Fall Leaf Drop Off Days

Nov 9 and 23



Shred Days
10 AM-NOON
April 20
September 14

BLOOD DRIVE NEWS



August 28, 2019
11 a.m.—5 p.m.



Appointments can be made with Michigan Blood by phone 1-866-MIBLOOD or e-mail info@miblood.org



If you would like to be added to the permanent Absentee Voter application list, please contact the Clerk's office at 216-5224 or email oshtemo@oshtemo.org

Anyone can be on the list to receive an application for absentee voting.

Sign up today!



Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/oshtemotownship/> or sign up at www.oshtemo.org to receive notifications and updates via email



From Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell:

Oshtemo Firefighters will be in your neighborhood this summer, testing fire hydrants and adding a thousand+ vertical wires that help locate hydrants in deep snow. Also, the Drake Farmstead Park timber frame barn construction is underway!

The Supervisor is working with the Township Board to develop the 2020 budget. Priorities recently discussed include building sidewalks on major roads, locating the first neighborhood park in an underserved area, continuing the sanitary sewer expansion (Phase I construction and Phase II engineering), police and fire protection, and improving township IT capabilities. By law the Township budget must balance, so multiple drafts and discussions in coming months will incorporate that critical parameter along with Board and community goals.

Many volunteers contribute so much to the operations of your Township! It is exciting to see the passion and community spirit they bring to a variety of ‘tables’—parks, business/neighborhood corridors, economic development, facilities, planning commission, historical society, etc. These citizens greatly extend the work of professional staff. Oshtemo Township is not small— we are 85th in population size in Michigan. Knowing all this, I would like to extend a Board AND community-wide sincere ***Thank You to our friends and neighbors who serve and volunteer***.

Please provide input on the budget and other topics and consider serving your Township. You can reach the Supervisor via (260) 216-5220, email (libbyhc@oshtemo.org), or during the next Supervisor Open Office Hours - Monday, July 29th from 12-2 PM.



From Clerk Dusty Farmer:

After the Master Cemetery Plan approval at the beginning of this year, the Clerk’s Office worked closely with the Supervisor and Parks Director to update the Cemetery Ordinance. Keeping in line with the goals and strategies of the Master Plan work, we ensured our new ordinance would help achieve the vision of the Township with regard to cemeteries. We are proud to announce that as part of this update, **Green Burials** are now available in the Township! Oshtemo is the first in Kalamazoo County to offer this service to people who would prefer a natural burial for either themselves or a loved one. Please read through our updated Cemetery Ordinance here: <https://tinyurl.com/oshtemocemeteries>

From Treasurer Grant Taylor:



SUMMER TAX BILLS ARE DUE Monday September 16th. A 1% penalty is applied for every month not paid after the deadline. Another 3% penalty is applied if not paid by February 28th. Postmarks are not accepted for tax payments.

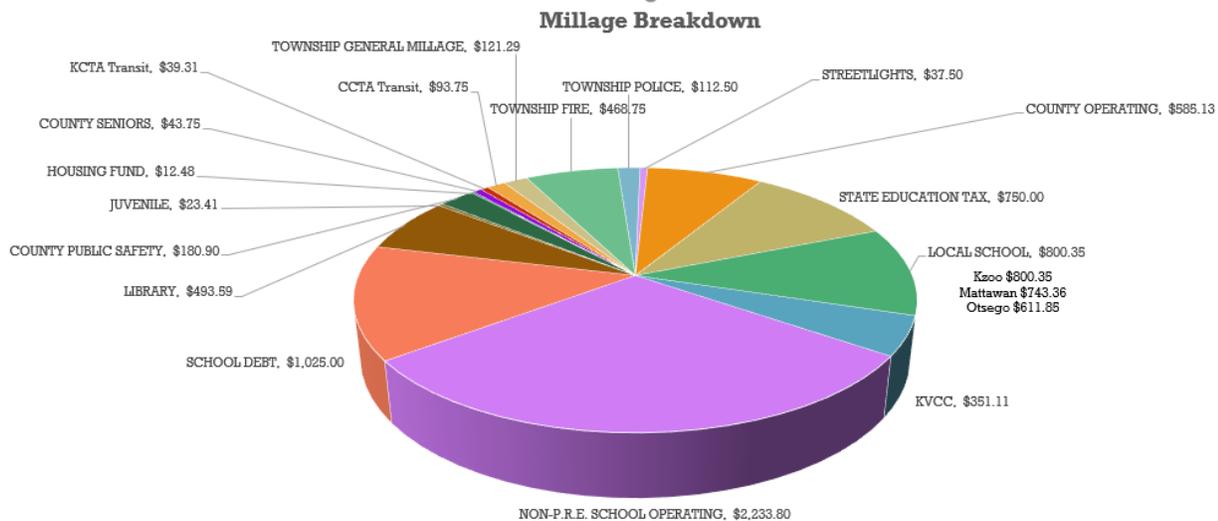
Tax bills are sent to the property owner unless a mortgage holder has requested it, which they must do for each tax season. If you receive a tax bill but have an escrow, you should forward the tax bill to your mortgage holder with a reminder they must request it from our office. If your mortgage company has requested the tax bill, you will not receive a copy, but may contact us and we will be glad to send you one. If you do not have an escrow and you did not receive a tax bill, you can get a copy of your tax bill, or verify taxes have been paid, by contacting the Treasurer’s Office at 216-5221 or on our website (www.oshtemo.org), which is updated daily. We accept credit cards at the counter and online. A 3% processing fee is charged by our credit card vender.

Please note taxes can be paid in person at the Township Office Monday through Thursday 8:00am – 5:00pm, and Friday 8:00am – 1:00pm. For non-business hours, you can use the **DROP BOX IN THE PARKING LOT, WHICH IS CHECKED DAILY.**

When taxes are collected by the Township, where do they go?

Below is a breakdown of how our taxes for both winter and summer are dispersed after collection. We used a home with a value of \$250,000 (taxable value \$125,000) baseline as an example. The large school operating amount would only apply if your home in Oshtemo is not your primary residence. The other school operating amounts will vary depending on the school district in which you live. The only amounts that stay entirely in the Township are the Township General Millage, Township Fire, Township Police, and Streetlights.

If you ever have any tax questions,
please call the office at 269-216-5221 or email gtaylor@oshtemo.org.



**Amounts based on a Home with a value of \$250,000
and a taxable value of \$125,000**

Parks —



Schlitz Creek Bluegrass Band will perform a high-energy stage show with hot pickin' and smooth vocalizations on **Sunday, July 14th**. Their repertoire includes standard bluegrass tunes as well as a collection of refreshing and unusual choices for a bluegrass band.

Kanola Band, a New Orleans style jazz ensemble led by trumpeter Benje Daneman, will perform on **Sunday, August 18th**. Their high-spirited music will have you snappin' your fingers and tappin' your toes!

Admission is free and all are welcome to attend. Concerts are from 6:00 -7:30 pm at the Flesher Field gazebo, 3664 South 9th Street. Hands-on art and a firefighter obstacle course are offered for kids during each concert. **Free ice cream treats and face painting, compliments of the Oshtemo Rotary Club, will be offered during the August concert.** Treat yourself to dinner from our food truck or bring a picnic. Alcohol is prohibited. In case of rain, concerts are held at Voyage Church on Atlantic Avenue. Music in the Park is sponsored by the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, and many local businesses.



For more information, visit www.oshtemo.org/events.

Oshtemo Fire and Rescue— Regional Trench Rescue Course - Operations Level



This month, Oshtemo joined the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety to participate in a three-day operations level Trench Rescue course. This training focused on freeing a worker who is experiencing a medical emergency or the victim of a collapse inside an 8' deep trench. Instruction for the 25 participants was provided by the Michigan Urban Search and Rescue Association (MUSAR) who are nationally recognized for their contributions to trench rescue.

Rescuers learned the dangers of unstable soil, which can weigh up to 100 lbs/ft³, by conducting hands-on training in actual trenches. They practiced the skills of managing the scene, applying shoring and sheeting to an unsafe trench, and making entry to rescue a person trapped.

Oshtemo Fire Department's specialty is trench rescue in Region 5 of Southwest Michigan. Our members attend specialized training, participate in the Region 5 Technical Rescue Task Force, and operate the only trench rescue trailer in the entire region.



Oshtemo Police—

Mail Theft Still a Top Priority for KCSO

Since September 2017 Kalamazoo County has had a spike in Larceny of Mail complaints. 293 complaints received to date. Some packages, but mostly mail. Suspects are stealing checks in outgoing and incoming mail. The checks are then washed, rewritten and fraudulently cashed. Sometimes the account numbers are copied and written as new checks. The suspect cashing the check is rarely the person stealing them. They work in teams and are very organized.

These complaints are just for KCSO. They do not include any other agency in Kalamazoo. It is also often unreported as people do not care if junk mail is taken, may not know something was taken, or just don't feel the need to call.

The Kalamazoo County Criminal Investigations Division has a binder of over 40 known suspects detailing the crews and groups they work with. Lt. Baker is working on more detailed numbers, but would estimate we have received convictions on over 30 people during this time, several in cooperation with the US Postal authorities and suspects are convicted in Federal Court. However, it has not slowed anything down. Mail theft has continued to rise over the last three years. Oshtemo and Comstock Township have held the highest number of complaints. Triple almost every other township.

Please take note of the tips we are pushing out to the community to help protect them from mail theft and possible future fraud:

- Place outgoing mail in a mailbox at the post office. Do not place mail in your mailbox and raise the red flag. The flag is now a known symbol saying there may be something worth stealing inside.
- Check your bank account regularly to make sure checks were cashed, and for the correct amount.
- Arrange for package delivery pickup from the carrier or have someone watch the house to pick it up as soon as possible. Also consider sending your packages to your work place if allowed.
- Report any suspicious vehicles going up to mailboxes immediately to your local police, don't wait. If possible obtain a vehicle description, color and license plate. Do not follow or attempt to intervene as these suspects are known to carry weapons.



Planning—

Agritourism is now available in Oshtemo Township!

In an effort to conserve and provide more economic opportunities to large tracts of agricultural and rural lands, the Township recently adopted the Agribusiness and Agritourism Ordinances.

Agritourism is typically defined as an agriculturally based operation or activity that brings the public to a working farm for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the farm operation. These activities can range from small roadside farm stands where seasonal fruits and vegetables are sold to large centers that operate year-round and provide a multitude of agriculture experiences. The Township has expanded on this definition to allow activities to also occur on rural residentially zoned properties.

The Agritourism Ordinance is a result of the public outreach garnered during the development of the rural preservation strategies of the Township 2017 Master Plan Update. The intent of the Ordinance is to provide a wider range of opportunities for properties in the rural area of the Township that are tempered by the desired character of the area and the peace and enjoyment of other private property owners.

If you are a property owner of 10 acres or more and wish to provide Agritourism opportunities on your land, please contact Planning Director Julie Johnston at jjohnston@oshtemo.org to learn more.

What can I recycle?



Unfortunately there is no simple answer, as it depends on the collection system and sorting facility used by your city or town. But your Department of Public Works will thank you if you depart from the world of “wishcycling” – crossing your fingers as you throw everything from pool toys and stuffed animals to coffee grinds in your recycle bin, hoping they will be taken away – and spend a few minutes educating yourself.

Here are a few tips:

1. Check your town or city’s website for a guide to recycling. Many communities or even states post a “recyclopedia” of what’s allowed and what isn’t.
2. Just because something is marked with the triangular recycling symbol doesn’t mean it can go in your curbside recycling. The biggest culprit is plastic grocery bags, which will gum up the machines at most facilities that take residential recycling. Most local grocery stores will recycle such bags, so bring them on your next shopping trip – and/or invest in reusable bags.
3. Food containers, particularly pizza boxes, can be too dirty to recycle. Scrape off that extra cheese, or only recycle the top half of the box.
4. Remove all plastic film, such as that found on the top of yogurt containers. Refrain from putting in long stringy items, like garden hoses or Christmas lights, which tangle up the fast-moving sorting machines and can cause injury to facility employees.
5. Don’t forget about the first two parts of the recycling triangle: Reduce and reuse.

Excerpt from The Christian Science Monitor (article by Christa Case Bryant, Staff Writer)

Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight outages can be reported directly to Consumers

Energy by calling:

800-477-5050

Or through the link at

www.oshtemo.org under the Frequently Asked Questions



Hiring a contractor making improvements on your property in 2019?

Decks, pools, sheds, and roofs need permits and might be subject to setback rules. Contact the Southwest Michigan Building Authority to find out which permit you need.

(269) 585-4150

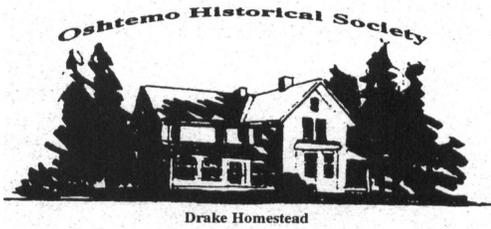
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911
ADDRESS
SIGNS
HELP
SAVE
LIVES

Do you have an Address Sign?

If you don’t have an address number sign, they are available to order through the Township office for **\$10.00.**

Please contact Linda to place an order:
375-4260 or lpotok@oshtemo.org



OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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 calendars for the following dates:

July 18- Establishing Native Plant Gardens to Attract Butterflies: Through the use of colorful photos, Isle Gerbhard will illustrate the process of creating a native plant garden and the rationale for doing so. She will have examples of native plants to show attendees.

Aug 15th- Tour Alamo Museum in Alamo Township (8119 N. 6th St.) at 7 PM

September 19th- The House of David: Chris Siriano will discuss this society, and specifically their baseball team, which was established in 1903 In Benton Harbor, MI

For more information about the Oshtemo Historical Society, please visit our website at

www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org

www.facebook.com/oshtemotownshi
www.oshtemo.org
Ph 375.4260 Fax 375.7180
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
7275 West Main Street

