



West Traverse Township 2008 Fall Newsletter

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West Traverse Township (Est. 1897)

Township Board

Bob Sandford - *Supervisor*
Cynthia Fisher - *Clerk*
Kristi Hollingsworth - *Treasurer*
John Baker - *Trustee*
Jim Bartlett - *Trustee*

Planning Commission

Paul Mooradian - *Acting Chair*
Joey Arbaugh - *Secretary*
Kristi Hollingsworth
*Paul Repasky
*Nancy Sarowski
Pete Wallin
Ann Wilderom

Zoning Board of Appeals

Ken Parada - *Chair*
*Jim Bartlett
Tim Hayner
Paul Mooradian
Open

Board of Review

Joretta Bethke - *Recording Secretary*
Jim Frang - *Chair*
Curt Regentin
Lou Zako

Thorne Swift Nature Preserve Committee

Sally Stebbins - *Chair*
Joey Arbaugh
John Baker
Sam DeCamp
Carolyn Sandford

Recreation Committee

*John Baker - *Chair*
Sandy Baker
Paul Repasky
John Riggs
*Bob Sandford

Water Board

Bob Sandford - *Chair*
Jim Bartlett
Wayne Chellis
Sam DeCamp

Planning/Zoning Administrator

Randy Frykberg

Assessor

Tim Grimm

Secretary

Sue Matsko

Office Hours

9:00 am - 1:00 pm daily

Board Meetings

2nd Tuesdays - 7:00 pm

Planning Commission Meetings

2nd Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

*Pending Township Board Approval
Effective January 1, 2009

From the Treasurer - Kristi Hollingsworth

Thank you to all of you who voted for me in this past election. I will continue to do my best in serving you as the Treasurer. If you have any questions concerning your tax bill, please do not hesitate to contact me at the township hall.

Please review your tax bill carefully for correct address, taxable value and principal residence exemption (PRE). Please report address changes or change of ownership promptly to the Treasurer. Failure to receive tax statements does not exempt taxes from penalties.

The Township office will be open from 9am-5pm to receive tax payments on the following dates:

- December 30, 2008: Last day to pay in 2008
- February 16, 2009: Taxes are due and payable without interest and penalties. Postmarks will be accepted. No exceptions to late payments.
- February 27, 2009: Taxes are due and payable before being returned as delinquent to the County Treasurer.

Please confirm that your check is signed and that it matches the total amount due for the bill. For payments that are not correct, the Treasurer will either return the check to the sender (which may result in interest charges) or send a second bill for any amount underpaid.

From the Clerk - Cynthia Fisher

What a year 2008 has been for the Clerk's Office! Four elections were held including the November General Election. The turnout in West Traverse Township was 77.6 percent, with 1,136 ballots cast out of 1,464 registered voters, placing the township 3rd in voter turnout in the County. For all of Emmet County the turnout was 69.9 percent. I want to thank the Election Inspectors for a job well done. Thanks also to all the West Traverse Township voters for participating in the electoral process in 2008!

Wishing everyone a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Township Officials

The new term for township officials that begins on November 20, 2008 marks the departure of Sophy Carpenter and Sam DeCamp as trustees. For Sophy, this truly is the end of an era. Sophy has served the township continuously for the past 28 years, the first 8 as clerk and the last 20 as trustee. For Sam, this is the end of his 8 years as trustee. We thank Sophy and Sam for their dedicated service and for their many contributions to the township.

The township board for the next four years now consists of: Supervisor – Bob Sandford; Clerk – Cynthia Fisher; Treasurer – Kristi Hollingsworth; Trustees – John Baker and Jim Bartlett. We invite you to join us at the regular township board meetings on the second Tuesday of the month, except for March when it is the last Tuesday. Also, do not hesitate to contact any of us if you have questions or concerns.

Property Taxes

In the Primary Election in August, two property tax millages affecting West Traverse Township were approved. The first was the 4-year renewal of an additional 1.0 mills designated for township road repairs, on top of the base 1.0 mills for general township operations. The second was the 4-year renewal of the 0.25 mills for the operations and maintenance of Thorne Swift Nature Preserve. The voting results for these millages were 126 yes - 42 no for road repairs and 141 yes - 38 no for Thorne Swift.

In the tax bills accompanying this letter, you will see that the taxes levied by the township are considerably below the authorized maximum of 2.25 mills. As approved by the township board on March 27, 2008, the township is levying 0.70 mills each for the township general fund and road fund for a total of 1.4 mills and 0.15 mills for Thorne Swift Nature Preserve for a combined total of 1.55 mills. As a percentage of total property taxes (both summer and winter), the township taxes represent 4.2% for non-homestead taxpayers and 6.9% for homestead taxpayers.

The township board will be holding a public meeting on March 31, 2009 on the proposed budget for the next fiscal year that begins April 1, 2009. Copies of the proposed budget will be available at the Township Hall prior to the public hearing. All taxpayers are encouraged to participate.

Water System Update

The water storage tank project has encountered mixed results. The first part of the project – installing pipes down Hughston Road from Cemetery Road and rebuilding that stretch of Hughston Road was completed on schedule and with very good results. The second part of the project – building the tank, has not gone as well. The Michigan DEQ initially denied the construction permit due to a concern the tank was undersized relative to the demand for fire protection and daily use. While the township did not agree that the tank was undersized, in order to secure a construction permit the tank was increased from 130,000 gallons to 156,000 gallons by adding 4 feet to the height. Unfortunately, the tank supplier required 10 weeks lead time, which actually turned out to be more like 15 weeks, to manufacture the larger tank. As a result, the tank is just now scheduled for on-site construction beginning the week of November 24. Construction is expected to take up to 2 weeks. The township has been assured by the tank manufacturer that the cold weather will not be a factor. Additional time will then be needed to install the water control system and flush out the tank. At this writing, it is hoped that the tank will be operational by the end of the year, but it could take until the spring of 2009.

Birchwood Medical First Responders

Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club Property Owners Association recently contacted the township about the medical first response services they provide for their residents. The Birchwood medical first responders (BMFR's) are licensed by the State of Michigan and have expressed a desire and willingness to provide their services elsewhere in the township when they are able to do so. The Township Board passed a resolution supporting the BMFR's and requested that the local 911 Central Dispatch Authority notify them of all medical calls within West Traverse Township, in addition to dispatching Allied EMS. Clearly, the BMFR's are not a substitute for Allied EMS, but depending upon the circumstances may be in a position to assist those needing medical services before Allied EMS arrives. This was demonstrated this past summer when the BMFR's provided valuable assistance to a township resident suffering a heart attack until Allied EMS could get there.

Please note: All requests for emergency medical services should continue to be made by calling 911. The 911 Central Dispatch Authority will dispatch both Allied EMS and the BMFR's to calls from West Traverse Township.

Planning & Zoning Activities

This year, thru November 17, the Township Zoning Administrator has issued the following 39 zoning permits:

- 9 new dwellings
- 14 major additions (over 300 square feet) or remodels
- 8 minor additions or minor remodels
- 6 new accessory buildings
- 2 other (one sign, one chimney replacement)

The Township Planning Commission (PC) has been active also. Years of work on updating the Master Plan culminated with a public hearing and acceptance of the revised plan by the PC. Two site plans were reviewed and approved (Northern Excavating in Franklin Park and Harbor Point Golf Course for their new entrance and off-road parking lot). The PC spent a lot of effort developing new regulations for Helicopters, Wind Turbine Generators, revisions to the C-1 Commercial District and a new Light Industrial District for the Franklin Park area.

Road Repair Projects

The repairs on Hughston Road noted in the previous newsletter have been completed. In addition, the Township Board decided to repair the stretch of Middle Road immediately east of M-119. The total cost for these projects was \$470,000.

In January, the Township Board will meet with the Emmet County Road Commission to review the potential projects for 2009. Final selection of the projects will be made at the Township Board meeting on March 31, 2009.

Shared Services

In addition to those services directly supported by specific millages (i.e. Allied EMS, Lakeview Cemetery, etc.), township taxpayers also contribute to other services through the township's general fund. Those services include the Harbor Springs Area Fire Authority, the Harbor-Petoskey Airport Authority, the Petoskey Library, and the City of Harbor Springs recreation facilities. The most recent contributions are:

- Fire Authority: \$40,121 - \$12,538 for equipment and \$27,583 for operational costs based on the number of runs and number of residences in the township.
- Airport Authority: \$8,849 - based on 0.30 mils of the townships SEV.
- Petoskey Library: \$2,170 - based on \$10 per township resident library card holder.
- City recreation facilities: \$8,686 - for use of the skating rink, sledding hill, and city beach by township residents based on a 1985 survey of users.

Library Services

As noted in the previous newsletter, a local committee was organized to raise awareness of the need for a public library in the Harbor Springs area (6 townships and City of Harbor Springs). This committee has held several meetings with the general public to assess the level of support for a district library and with the township boards and city council to communicate its findings.

The next step in the process of establishing a district library is to form a District Library Planning Committee (DLPC) made up of representatives from the municipalities interested in potentially joining the district library if indeed it is created. The DLPC is charged with determining the details of a potential district library – membership, governance, location, funding, etc. for consideration by each of the participating municipalities. Whatever the DLPC decides is not binding – a municipality can withdraw from the DLPC at any time. The decision to actually join the district library will require approval by both the township board and the township voters.

In November, the Township Board passed a resolution to participate on the DLPC and designated Bob Sandford and Eva Lauer as the township's representatives. At press time, Friendship Township, Little Traverse Township, Cross Village Township, and the City of Harbor Springs have passed similar resolutions. Readmond Township and Pleasantview Township are expected to do likewise in December.