



Whitewater Township Newsletter



This Newsletter can be found on the Township Website: whitwatertownship.org

Directory



5777 Vinton Road * P.O. Box 159
Williamsburg, MI 49690
Phone 231-267-5141
Fax 231-267-9020
www.whitwatertownship.org

SUPERVISOR

Ron Popp ext. 23
Supervisor@whitwatertownship.org

CLERK

Cheryl Goss ext. 24
Mon thru Thurs 9 am - 5 pm
Clerk@whitwatertownship.org

TREASURER

Ardella Benak ext. 22
P.O. Box 100
Hours: M-W-F 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Treasurer@whitwatertownship.org

TRUSTEE

Paul Hubbell
Message 231-267-5141
Trustee02@whitwatertownship.org

TRUSTEE

Heidi Vollmuth
Message 231-267-5141
Trustee01@whitwatertownship.org

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

ext. 21
Thursdays 8:30 - 4:30
Zoning@whitwatertownship.org

ASSESSOR

Dawn Kuhns - 231-409-1827
By Appointment
assessordawn@gmail.com

FIRE & AMBULANCE

911 Emergency
Fire Hall 231-267-5969

PLANNING COMMISSION

Kim Mangus, Chair
231-631-2326

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Luann Snider, Director
231-883-3193

GT COUNTY RD COMM

231-922-4848



December Board of Review (BOR)



The Whitewater Township Board of Review will meet on Tuesday, December 15th at 4:30pm for the purpose of correcting clerical errors or mutual mistake of fact. They will **NOT** be hearing valuation appeals at this meeting. If there is a clerical error on your tax bill, please contact Dawn Kuhns, Assessor at 231-409-1827.

- ◆ The deadline for qualifying for the Principal Residence Exemption is June 1st of each year.
- ◆ Veteran exemptions are granted by the Board of Review each year for 100% totally and permanently disabled veterans or veterans who are determined unemployable by the Veterans Administration. Applications for the 2021 tax year may be turned in starting January 1, 2021.

Please contact Township Assessor Dawn Kuhns at 231-409-1827 with any questions.



Comings & Goings Thank You For Your Service

Saying Goodbye..... And Saying Welcome

Lloyd Lawson served two terms as a Trustee and a member of the Planning Commission for Whitewater Township. Lloyd's valuable knowledge of electronics and his willingness to act as our IT expert in a pinch will be greatly missed. His dedication and service to this community is very much appreciated.

Glenn Savage has retired from the Planning Commission. Glenn is a life long resident and business owner in our community. His insight has been invaluable. His expertise will be missed.

Kim Halstead has retired from serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and the Board of Review. Through his many years of service, Kim showed a consistency in his view on personal property rights, his dedication to his core values and common sense was evident in all his decisions. Thank you Kim!

Heidi Vollmuth is your newest township official. Heidi's term began November 20th. Let's all take the time to welcome Heidi to the township board. You can meet her at our next board meeting, December 8, 2020, at 7:00pm

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- 12/02 Planning Commission
- 12/08 Township Board
- 12/09 Historical Society
- 12/14 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 12/15 Dec. Board of Review
- 12/17 ZBA
- 12/25 Christmas



JANUARY

- 1/01 New Year's Day
- 1/06 Planning Commission
- 1/11 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 1/12 Township Board
- 1/13 Historical Society
- 1/28 ZBA



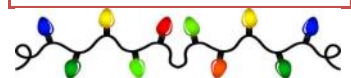
FEBRUARY

- 2/03 Planning Commission
- 2/08 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 2/09 Township Board
- 2/10 Historical Society
- 2/14 Valentines
- 2/25 ZBA

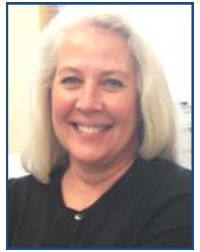


MARCH

- 3/03 Planning Commission
- 3/08 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 3/09 Township Board
- 3/10 Historical Society
- 3/17 St. Patrick's Day
- 3/25 ZBA



“Details, Details” . . . From the Clerk



Greetings to the Whitewater Township Community –

The year 2020 has surely been a year like no other in recent memory. Although having three major elections in one year is normal in the years that we elect the President of the United States, having to conduct the August and November elections during a pandemic affected all aspects of the election preparation process. With fewer voting booths available due to social distancing, it also greatly affected the amount of time it took for voters to vote in person. The wait times to vote in person on November 3 were 1-1/2 to 2 hours the entire day, and it took until 10:00 p.m. for all the voters in line at 8:00 p.m. to finish voting. This year, 647 voted in person. In contrast, in November 2016, 1063 voters came through the township hall, with the last voter out of the building by 8:00 p.m.

The good news is that voter registration and voter turnout have increased. For November 2020, there were 2,373 registered voters, of which 1,883 voted (1,236 via absent voter ballot, 647 in person). Turnout in Whitewater Township was 79.35%. It is appropriate that we should recognize the election inspectors who worked all of the 2020 elections, but especially those who worked the pandemic elections in August and November. All of the hundreds of hours they put in for pre-election testing and training, setting up the precinct, and staffing the precinct and absent voter counting board on both Election Days was done under the specter of a virus. While election inspectors do get paid, I appreciate their willingness to step forward in the middle of a pandemic. Please join me in thanking the following inspectors who worked in August or November or both (in random order): **Luann Snider, Diana Cooper, Jan Donkers, Cora Foust, Teresa Foust, Kristine Simpson, Maria Taylor, Beth Williams, Kathi Gober, Lynda Dawson, Sheri Pilate, Beverly Saur, Marian Saur, Nicole Schultz, Kathy Brady, and Kelli Clark.** Special mention also goes to Deputy Clerk Terese Hooper and Kathi Gober for working many hours prior to both the August and November elections issuing and receiving absent voter ballots. **Thank you to all for a job well done!**

We are looking forward to a little slower pace now that the elections are over, but office hours are still Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please give us a call at 231-267-5141 x24 or send an e-mail to clerk@whitewatertownship.org if you have questions or concerns. If we don't have the answer, we will point you in the right direction.

And thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve Whitewater Township!

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk



Devin Melton and Brett Bruner volunteered community hours to install the new trail signs at Whitewater Township Park.



Dennis Leach 1950 - 2020



Dennis Leach, long-time township resident and valued member of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, passed away on September 29. In addition to serving on the advisory committee, Denny was very involved in a hands-on way with our local parks. He has been mowing trails, removing trees, and maintaining the dam at Battle Creek Natural Area for years. In recent years, he helped with installation of playground equipment at the campground and Hi Pray Park. This fall, he took on the responsibility of building three new kiosks to be placed at Lossie Road Nature Trail and Battle Creek Natural Area and, with assistance from another township resident, finished those not long before his passing. Denny was not paid for any of these activities; he was a true volunteer. We have no doubt left out some of his contributions. In his honor, a bench will be installed at the BCNA pond.

Denny was also a regular volunteer with the Williamsburg Post of the American Legion.



He will be greatly missed in the Whitewater Township community.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

Supervisor's - Update

Neighbors and Friends

The Holidays are upon once again, and while they may look a little different this year, hopefully we can find a way to spend time with family.

The 2020 construction season saw some significant infrastructure projects in the township. Two natural gas main expansion projects are finishing up just in time for the winter heating season. Thank you to the hardworking folks at DTE and all of our neighbors who signed up for this valuable service. 186network of Rapid City was hard at work in the area too, expanding their fiber internet services to the Baggs and Skegemog Point Roads corridors of the Township. We look forward to working with both of these service providers in the future keeping Whitewater a great place to call home.



Final touches were completed this fall on the Emergency Services Building Parking Lot. The drainage issues were addressed to help rid the paddock area from wintertime snow and ice buildup. Looking out the office window, I think we will get the chance to test out the engineering very soon! Thank you to Elmer's Crane and Dozer, Inc. and Machin Engineering for the design and construction of the project. Fire Chief Brandon Flynn performed onsite Project Management and Choreographer duties, moving the emergency vehicles in, out, about, and around through various parts of the construction. Thank you to everyone who took part in the project.

Continuing concerns about COVID-19 have delayed the Planning Commission's work on an Event Barn ordinance and a possible change to the minimum 5-acre lot size in the RC-1 District. The open house platform the group wanted to use to gather public input is currently frowned on and they are hopeful 2021 will bring about a better social climate to accomplish those goals. As always, the Township's website will be used to notify folks of upcoming meetings and agendas.

Addressing deteriorating road conditions within the Township remains high on the to do list. We are working collaboratively with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission's Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System (PASER) to develop budgeting tools which will help us understand the funding task in front of us. We have heard from nearly every neighborhood in the Township about some type of road issue either with the driving surface or the drainage ditch not functioning as designed.

The Township Board has recently been asked to repeal its July 2019 Ordinance #55 prohibiting Marihuana Establishments in the Township. Requests allowing Grow and Processing of the product have been received with Special Meetings held September 22 and November 17, 2020. A Proposed Ordinance to permit the new use has been developed and the required Public Hearing conducted. The next meeting on the topic is December 8, 2020. Please feel free to contact your Board Members with any comments or concerns. All of our email addresses are posted on the Township Website.

Respectfully

Ron Popp

Whitewater Township Supervisor



MERRY CHRISTMAS



Whitewater Township Fire Department is always looking for part-time paid firefighters to join our family.



If you have what it takes and enjoy a sense of community, please contact Fire Chief Brandon Flynn for details.

firechief@whitwatertownship.org

Not quite ready for the commitment? You can always follow the excitement on our FB page.



facebook.com/whitewaterFD

PUBLIC NOTICE

Littering Enforcement Begins at Recycling Center

In accordance with the Michigan Penal Code (Act 328 of 1931), MCL 750.552a, "Any person who shall dump, deposit or place any filth, garbage or refuse on the grounds or premises of another, without the specific permission of the owner thereof, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor." Violators are subject to a fine of \$500 or 90 days in jail.

The problem had become so egregious earlier in the year that the township found it necessary to invest in a security camera system to monitor the recycling area so American Waste would not remove this valuable, convenient recycling station.

Clearly visible signs have been posted at the recycling center. Please do your part in keeping the recycling station here in our township by keeping it clean. **THANK YOU**





Treasurer's Corner

I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
From my family to yours, here's wishing you a safe and joyous holiday season.

Ardella M. Benak



Dates to Remember.....

- ⇒ Winter Tax bills due without interest by 2/16/2021
- ⇒ A 1% interest each month for delinquent Winter Taxes starting 2/17/2021
- ⇒ **Summer 2020 Deferment** must be paid by 2/16/2021
- ⇒ A 3% penalty will be assessed on delinquent taxes starting 2/17/2021
- ⇒ Last day to pay your property taxes at Whitewater Township Hall 3/01/2021
- ⇒ Delinquent 2020 Real Property taxes are turned over to GT County 3/02/2021
- ⇒ A 4% penalty plus a 1% interest fee will be assessed by GTC starting 3/02/2021



Personal Property Taxes starting with the numbers: 28-13-900 will continue to be collected at the Township Treasurer's office as they do not get turned over to the County.

Partial payments are accepted. When paying with **CASH**, please have the **exact amount** of your tax bill. I thank you for your understanding in this matter. The township does not accept credit card payments. After March 2, 2021, please call Grand Traverse County Treasurer's office for the correct payoff amount due at 231-922-4535.



Marijuana (THC) / Hemp (CBD)

On December 8, 2020, the township board will be considering General Ordinance 59, Permitting Commercial Medical Marijuana Facilities, and General Ordinance 60, Permitting Adult-Use Marijuana Establishments and repeal of General Ordinance 55.

In Whitewater Township's case, Facilities and Establishments are strictly for indoor grow and processing facilities. We **ARE NOT** considering Outdoor Grow, Micro-business, Retail Dispensaries, Safety Compliance Facilities, Secure Transporter, Designated Consumption Establishments or Temporary Marijuana Events! Districts to be permitted would be existing Agricultural and Industrial to be controlled via special use permit. Special use permits would set zoning rules for screening, setbacks, buffer zones around schools, parks, churches, hours of operation, lighting regulations, etc. The process would allow careful consideration to determine appropriate suitable locations within the Township within those two districts.

Several years ago, the township board, in an effort to be more transparent, decided to self-impose a requirement to hold a public hearing prior to consideration of any general ordinance changes or adoptions. This is not required by law; only zoning ordinances are required to have public hearings. The board has been falsely accused of not being transparent on this issue. This is not the first time this issue has been on our agenda. Just this year, the topic of marijuana was discussed on February 11, September 8, September 22, October 13, and November 17. There is no effort to sneak this through. No board member has any financial gain to be had. No one is attempting to fast track this issue! It is important to understand that the \$5,000 fee collected per application will be used to offset any costs related to the permitting process and any future expenses related to these two general ordinances. This alleviates any burden on the general fund.

Like it or not, medical and recreational marijuana are now legal in Michigan. November of 2018, the State of Michigan voters passed Proposal 18-1 for Recreational use/sale of Marijuana. Whitewater Township voters; YES: 728, NO: 807. Grand Traverse County voters; YES: 20,045, NO: 13,423. With the passage of Proposal 18-1 the State of Michigan formed the Michigan Marijuana Regulatory Agency (MRA) to oversee and regulate licensing. The MRA requires multiple stages of application approval through a strict licensing process. The MRA Municipal Guide is available at: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mra/MRA_Municipal_Guide_705502_7.pdf .

Farming is a business/commercial venture that typically operates in rural communities. Whitewater is a rural community. Marijuana (THC) and Hemp (CBD) are agricultural crops that our local farmers may or may not decide are profitable enough for them to keep their farms. At our November 17, 2020, special meeting a local farmer said ***"we have lost lots of farmers throughout the last 30 years, 40 years, and it is really tough. You either have to get really huge normally in order to survive or you have got to find some kind of niche market that allows you to survive."*** He also said that it seems to him that the hemp and probably the marijuana grow would give the farmers another niche where a small-time farmer could survive. Cherries and apples are not making it these days. Giving farmers the support needed to keep our community RURAL is what we are attempting to do. Please join us December 8, 2020, at 7:00 pm.

Your opinions and viewpoints are always welcome.