



Whitewater Township Newsletter



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



DIRECTORY

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www.whitwatertownship.org

SUPERVISOR

Ron Popp ext. 23
Supervisor@whitwatertownship.org

CLERK

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

TREASURER

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

TRUSTEE

Don Glenn
231-267-5141
dglenn6542@yahoo.com

TRUSTEE

Heidi Vollmuth
231-633-9468
heidivourtrustee@gmail.com

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Bob Hall ext. 21
Thursdays 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Zoning@whitwatertownship.org

ASSESSOR

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

FIRE & AMBULANCE

911 Emergency
Fire Hall 231-267-5969
FireChief@whitwatertownship.org

PARKS & RECREATION

Ranger Station - 231-267-5091

PLANNING COMMISSION

Kim Mangus, Chair
231-631-2326
manguspc@yahoo.com

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Luann Snider, Chair
231-883-3193
historical@whitwatertownship.org

GT COUNTY RD COMM

231-922-4848



December Board of Review (DBOR)

The Whitewater Township Board of Review will meet on Tuesday, December 13 at 4:00 pm 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.



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 2023 tax year may be turned in starting January 1, 2023.



ZONING ADMINISTRATOR - Bob Hall



**CAN YOU MAKE SOME EXTRA MONEY RENTING
OUT YOUR HOUSE FOR A COUPLE WEEKS DURING
THE TOURIST SEASON?
HOW ABOUT DURING HUNTING SEASON?**

The Answer Is . . . NO

Short-term rental of a residential dwelling for any period of less than 30 days is currently **not allowed** in Whitewater Township. Although not allowed within a residential dwelling, short-term rentals may be permitted in certain zoning districts as bed and breakfasts, hotels and motels, campgrounds and other similar uses.



CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- 12/07 Planning Commission
- 12/12 Park & Rec Advisory
- 12/13 Township Board
- 12/13 Board of Review 4 pm
- 12/25 Christmas



JANUARY

- 1/01 New Year's Day
- 1/04 Planning Commission
- 1/10 Township Board
- 1/17 Park & Rec Advisory
- 1/26 ZBA



FEBRUARY

- 2/01 Planning Commission
- 2/14 Township Board
- 2/20 President's Day
- 2/21 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 2/23 ZBA



MARCH

- 3/01 Planning Commission
- 3/14 Township Board
- 3/21 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 3/17 St. Patrick's Day
- 3/23 ZBA



PREP TIME: 10 MIN.
BAKE TIME: 25-30 MIN.
YIELD: 24 BARS

MAGIC SANTA COOKIE BARS

Ingredients

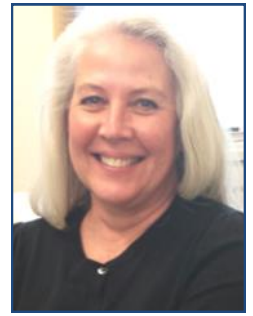
- 2 cups graham wafer crumbs
- 3/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 can Eagle brand sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 3/4 cup white, semi-sweet or milk chocolate chips
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup mini-marshmallows

Directions

1. Combine graham crumbs with butter, press evenly onto parchment-lined 13x9 baking pan.
2. Pour 2/3 Eagle brand over crumbs.
3. Sprinkle with pecans, chips, cranberries, coconut and marshmallows, press down firmly. Pour remaining Eagle brand overtop.
4. Bake in preheated 350F oven for 25-30 min or until lightly browned. Cool thoroughly and cut into bars.



"Details, Details" . . . From the Clerk



WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP PARK UPDATE

As many of you know, the township board has been pursuing a major facility upgrade at Whitewater Township Park since late 2018. A visioning session/kickoff meeting was held in January 2019. Conceptual plans detailing many potential upgrades were provided by the well-known and respected engineering firm of Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V) in March 2019. Primary initial focus was placed on boat launch and entryway improvements at an estimated cost of \$400,000 and a Department of Natural Resources, Waterways Division, grant was sought. In June 2019 the township was awarded a \$200,000 matching grant for the initial phase. In August 2019, the township signed a Boating Access Site Construction Agreement with the DNR requiring, among other things, the project to be completed within three years. In December 2019, a Professional Services Agreement was signed between Whitewater Township and F&V to provide final engineering on the project.

In 2020, there was a nearly 5-month long pause (April to late August) placed on project deliverables and payments by the DNR due to COVID. The township was allowed to review/discuss plans and share them with the public during that time. The township provided a 6-week long public comment period from 7/1 to 8/15/2020 on the new preliminary plans through a link on the township website. A formal public hearing was held in January 2021 and more public comment was received, the largest percentage of which supported the project. Also in January 2021, the township board approved the revised project plans and instructed F&V to proceed to final design engineering and permitting.

In February 2021, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians awarded the township a 2% grant in the amount of \$20,000 toward the boat launch/entryway project. In April 2021, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy issued its permit to install the new ramps. In June 2021, due to timing of the improvements and price volatility, F&V recommended the project not be put out for bid until mid-November, with work anticipated to begin in spring 2022. A boating access site agreement time extension was provided by the DNR and approved by the township board in April 2022.

In May 2022, township board members Popp, Glenn, and Vollmuth voted no to authorizing the clerk to work with F&V to finalize the project manual and seek formal sealed bids for the project. Instead, an updated estimated cost of construction, with items added that were not part of the DNR grant scope, was requested. The revised estimate was received in early June. Due to increased costs, a meeting was held in September 2022 between the DNR representative, township clerk, and an F&V engineer regarding the possibility of scaling back the project. The DNR was open to some scaling of the project as long as the overall scope (elements) were still completed.

Recently, some disturbing actions have taken place. At the 10/11/2022 meeting, board member Glenn brought a motion to transfer 85% of the unexpended balance from the Park Fund (user fees only; no taxpayer monies) to the General Fund on December 31st, and for this to occur annually thereafter. Glenn stated the rationale is to "help the board be able to redistribute monies . . . to then redirect towards roads, fire, parks, ARPA, how we see fit . . . the park is the golden goose." Vollmuth said, "We are trying to get control of expenses . . ." Board member Benak and I opposed the motion. A Michigan Townships Association speaker recently opined that you would only commingle user fees with taxpayer revenue "if the general fund was in trouble." The General Fund balance as of 11/30/2022 is a healthy \$836,545.00. The planned transfer of a huge portion of Park Fund user fees appears to be an attempt to defund the Boat Launch/Entryway Improvement Project, which will also result in the loss of the \$200,000 matching grant from the DNR, an outside commitment to our community that should not be squandered.

Some further perspective about the Park Fund is necessary. On 11/30/2012 (10 years ago), the balance in the Park Fund was \$33,735.56. On 11/30/2022, the balance in the Park Fund is \$385,942.96. The Park Fund has grown by over \$352,000 in that 10-year period, much of which has been earmarked to pay the township's share of the cost of the Boat Launch/Entryway Improvement Project and other capital improvement projects. Growth of that magnitude in the Park Fund is a demonstration of prudent fiscal management by those who are closely associated with the day-to-day operations of the park.

More to come on the boat launch/entryway improvement project at the 12/13/2022 meeting of the township board. Meeting access can be gained via Zoom at this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87534557006?pwd=dU5wTGFOSmVtdWtscFVHNNqA2VlZz09>
Meeting ID: 875 3455 7006, Passcode: 972660



Also, several months ago, the township board created a job description for a Deputy Parks & Recreation Administrator with pay range to be anywhere from \$35,000 to \$45,000 annually. This will be the second highest paid position in the Township. This position has not been filled. The job description is posted at www.whitewatertownship.org. If you or anyone you know is interested in this position, please submit your application to the township.

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk

*Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!*



Supervisor's - Update

Winter 2022, Neighbors and Friends

Thank you to everyone who took part in the ARPA survey conducted last Fall. Using results from the survey the Township is moving forward with broadband expansion, fire Apparatus purchases and recreation venue improvements. With so many grant funding opportunities currently available, 2023 will be a busy year for writing and submitting grants. Anyone wishing to assist with grant writing please reach out to any Board member.



We hear a lot about Short Term Rental issues from other townships. The topic can have a significant impact on neighboring properties and the ability to change a neighborhood from primarily residential uses to something more transient in nature. The south end of Torch Lake along SW Torch Lake Drive, Crystal Beach Road, and SE Torch Lake Drive are good examples of this happening. Currently, Whitewater Township does not allow Short-Term rental of a residential dwelling for any period of less than 30 days. Although not allowed within a residential dwelling, short-term rentals may be permitted in certain zoning districts as bed and breakfasts, hotels and motels, campgrounds, and other similar uses. There are many groups working to sway the legislature to take away local control of this question away you by making short term rental a use by right in all zoning districts (House Bill 4722). Anytime the State moves to reduce self-governance we should be concerned about what right they will attack next.

The Township Hired a professional planner, Randy Mielnik to assist the Planning Commission with Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates. Randy is a Whitewater Township resident and we are very appreciative to have his services. Please look to the Township website for meeting and agenda information of the Planning Commission and other Boards and Commissions operating within the Township.

The Township is seeking new members for Planning Commission, Park & Recreation, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Board of Review. Please contact the Supervisor at supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com for an interview.

Ren Popp

Whitewater Township Supervisor



Halloween 2022 at Whitewater Township Park

The 47th Annual Halloween Party on October 1st was a huge success! The weather was gorgeous, and lots of costumed trick-or-treaters came out with their parents. Numerous campers reported that they love the event and they look forward to it each year. A HUGE thank-you to all of the Whitewater Township Fire Department and auxiliary volunteers who spent many hours of their personal time planning, organizing, fetching, setting up tents and games and tables, setting up food and drinks and serving it, manning games, making sure everyone was having a good time, and then taking it all down and putting it away for another year, as well as park rangers who worked hard to keep the park facilities clean and campers happy! The campground is now closed for the 2022 season, but we look forward to celebrating another great community event in 2023!



Winter Greetings from Whitewater Township Fire Department

2022 has been a busy year so far for the fire department. We have seen an increase in calls and we are dealing with new rules for training and operations that have come down from the Michigan State Firefighters Training Division and even Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA). These new rules clearly define initial and continuing firefighter training requirements so the days of just hanging out at the fire station on meeting nights is long gone. Our paid-on-call firefighters are subject to the same training requirements as a full-time firefighter. We hold training meetings once a week to keep up with these requirements and needless to say, no time is wasted.

I would like to welcome to our team three new employees. Two of them, Cole K. and Joe P. are currently enrolled in the fire academy and will complete their initial education in May 2023. The third, Brian H., comes to us already trained as Firefighter I & II and Basic EMT. These three will no doubt be an asset to Whitewater Township.



Please remember to check your smoke alarms/detectors and the smoke alarms/detectors of your loved one's this winter. As of November 15, 2022, Michigan has had 106 fire related fatalities in 88 fires with careless smoking as the leading cause of these fires. Many of these fatalities occurred because of absent or non-functioning smoke alarms/detectors. Winter months and the holiday season brings additional fire safety concerns. If you need help with smoke alarms/detectors, or any other safety tips, please contact the Whitewater Township Fire Department, we will be happy to help.



Thank you and be safe!

Brandon Flynn
Fire Chief

MERRY CHRISTMAS



facebook.com/whitewaterFD



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 2/14/2023
- ⇒ A 1% interest each month for delinquent Winter Taxes starting 2/15/2023
- ⇒ **Summer 2022 Deferment** must be paid by 2/14/2023
- ⇒ A 3% penalty will be assessed on delinquent taxes starting 2/15/2023
- ⇒ Last day to pay your property taxes at Whitewater Township Hall 2/28/2023
- ⇒ Delinquent 2021 Real Property taxes are turned over to GT County 3/01/2023
- ⇒ A 4% penalty plus a 1% interest fee will be assessed by GTC starting 3/01/2023



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 1, 2023, please call Grand Traverse County Treasurer's office for the correct payoff amount due at 231-922-4535.

*We do accept the postmark date as paid on time. **HOWEVER**, if payment is received after the tax due date without a date or missing postmark, the payment will be considered late. Interest and penalties will be applied to the bill. FYI: "Online bill pay" payments do **NOT** come in with postmarks. Without a postmark, we will consider received the date of the check.*

NEW PLANNER FOR WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP

Whitewater Township recently hired Randy Mielnik (North Place Planning, LLC) as a Planning and Zoning Consultant. Randy has been a professional Planner for more than forty years and retired from full time work in May, 2021. He and his wife, Sue, have owned property in Whitewater Township for about 10 years and have lived here since 2017. Randy spent the bulk of his career as a planning consultant working for large and small local governments in Michigan and Ohio. He has provided services to support a range of planning projects including zoning and master plan updates and related community development projects. Randy has a Master's Degree in Planning and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. In November, he began work with Whitewater's Planning Commission on required updates to the 2015 Whitewater Township Master Plan along with zoning ordinance updates.



Rachel Steelman
Has been appointed to the Whitewater Township Planning Commission.
Welcome, Rachel, and thank you!

PARKS & RECREATION UPDATES

The Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee has been working on many projects and grants to better our township. The Whitewater Township Park Playground upgrade has been completed. The Hi Pray Park old dugouts have been replaced and are ready to be used by the Little League baseball teams and community in the Spring! The Hi Pray Park Playground had the borders expanded, decals added to equipment, and new signage added with safety rules. The final inspection by the playground inspector will be scheduled soon, then we hope the playground will be allowed to re-open to the public.

We had hundreds of trees that fell in a high wind storm August 2021, which affected Battle Creek Natural Area (BCNA) trails and the Lössie Road Nature Trails (LRNT). The board approved and moved all Recreation funding to this tree cleanup project. Lössie and the main trail section of BCNA was completed. We received approval by the board to use 27.5% portion of the ARPA local funds towards BCNA and LRNT improvements. We have and are currently working on applying for more grant funds to continue to improve our parks & recreation properties.

We wish you and your families a safe and happy holidays!

Melissa Melton PRAC Chairperson

