

# Whitewater Township Newsletter

FALL 2025

## DIRECTORY

Whitewater Township Hall  
5777 Vinton Rd. PO Box 159  
Williamsburg, MI 49690  
Phone: 231-267-5141  
Fax: 231-267-9020  
www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov

## SUPERVISOR

Linda Slopsema ext. 23  
supervisor@whitewatertownshipmi.gov

## CLERK

Wendy Hoeksema ext. 24  
clerk@whitewatertownshipmi.gov  
Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. to Noon

## TREASURER

Jill Koester ext. 22  
treasurer@whitewatertownshipmi.gov  
Tuesday and Thursday Noon to 5 p.m.

## TRUSTEE

Randy Mielnik  
Trustee01@whitewatertownshipmi.gov  
231-534-2420

## TRUSTEE

Tim Arends  
Trustee02@whitewatertownshipmi.gov  
231-534-2421

## ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Deb Graber ext. 21  
zoning@whitewatertownshipmi.gov  
Monday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## ASSESSOR

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

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

911 Emergency  
Chief Josh Morgan 231-267-5969  
frechief@whitewatertownshipmi.gov

**As 2025 draws to a close, this newsletter provides a partial list of major steps forward that continue to help make Whitewater Township an even better place to call home.**

## MAJOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS ON THE WAY

- New efforts to address long-standing road problems on Skegemog Point Rd. occurred this summer, as property owners demonstrated support for a special assessment to help fund improvements. Assessment proceeds, with township and road commission funding combined to provide the necessary \$900,000 needed to complete the work in 2026 along the whole length of this road. Cook Road will also be improved this summer.
- Persistent electrical issues at Whitewater Township Park and Campground have been addressed. Two of the five loops were separated and rebuilt to provide more reliable service throughout the park while also allowing for future expansion, service to a boat wash station, and a new ranger station.

## GRANTS

- In December, the Township Board acted quickly to protect grant funding. Originally awarded for a nature trail project, \$100,000 in ARPA funding was nearly lost as proposed improvements were not under contract as required by the end of 2024. Fortunately, funds could be reassigned to an existing contract to purchase a new fire truck, thereby still benefiting residents. A new fire truck is on the way in early 2026.
- A nearly \$60,000 Fire Prevention & Safety Grant was awarded to launch a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Mitigation Program, which focuses on reducing wildfire risk through community education, hazard assessments, and defensible space projects.
- About \$10,000 from the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC) was awarded for a handicap-accessible door with push-button access.
- The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians awarded a \$15,000 grant for the engineering and design phase of the electrical upgrade at Whitewater Township Park and Campground.

## TOWNSHIP HALL

The township hall building has presented challenges for many years in terms of space needs, building conditions, heating and cooling, and electrical issues. In 2025, some necessary heating, cooling, and electrical projects were completed to provide a more comfortable space for employees and the public.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

The Fire Department has modernized its fire attack packages with new hoses and nozzles, improving both efficiency and firefighter safety. The upgraded equipment enables greater water flow, lighter handling, and faster deployment, helping crews control fires more effectively while reducing fatigue on the scene. Also, since April, the department has responded to medical emergencies alongside Mobile Medical Response (MMR). This partnership ensures additional trained personnel arrive quickly to begin patient care.

## PLANNING AND ZONING

Important planning and zoning strides have been made, including:

- A reorganized, clarified zoning ordinance was adopted early in 2025. This included addressing zoning map issues and minor text amendments to create a more user-friendly, searchable, and linked document.
- A new Master Plan was adopted in February. The planning process began in 2023 with a public survey, workshops, followed by substantial efforts to identify community goals and actionable steps to achieve them.
- A consultant is now assisting the Planning Commission with additional zoning updates to implement the Master Plan and to address long-standing problems with procedures, development requirements, and other regulations. The review of the first of several “bundles” of updated zoning text began in November.
- Work is progressing to address Short Term Rentals (STRs), with a committee of the Planning Commission created to identify options and best practices. Additional community engagement efforts are being planned.

## COMPUTERS / SOFTWARE – KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGING DIGITAL WORLD

- Significant problems existed with software and computer equipment. Changes subsequently made included moving to a .gov domain for email and website for increased security, standardizing software, replacing outdated equipment, improving virus protection, and implementing a system-wide backup protection.
- Coverage of meetings on Zoom proved initially challenging, but with new investments in equipment and contracted services from LIAA, Zoom is now performing well. Residents can watch meetings online and participate in public hearings from home.
- The decision was made to migrate all data handling and management to BS&A software. Local governments in Michigan widely use BS&A software for financial management and other government functions. This change enables improved data access and better reports.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

- Whitewater is taking final steps to update its Recreation Plan. The Michigan DNR requires this plan to be eligible to apply for several grant programs. It identifies needs and priorities for parks and recreation over the next 5 years. A public survey was completed, and final steps toward approval are expected soon.
- Hi-Pray Park received a much-needed upgrade this summer with the installation of new aluminum bleachers, replacing the very old wooden ones. This improvement provides a safer and more comfortable experience for Little League families, benefiting more than 200 children who participate in programs each season.

## NEW TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The Township Board now meets twice a month to improve the way business is conducted, and to help eliminate lengthy meetings. The first meeting, held on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM, is the general township board meeting. A second meeting is held at 9:00 AM on the fourth Thursday of each month. This second public meeting is generally reserved for operational and management agenda items. Special meetings may also be held for other purposes as needed. All meetings of committees and boards are shown on the calendar provided on the township website.

## UPCOMING IN 2026

While it is not possible to know everything the future may bring, the following issues are likely to receive attention in the months ahead:

- The issue of regulation of short-term rentals will likely receive more attention. As the township's work group continues to investigate options and information, plans are underway to learn more about what all residents consider to be appropriate regulations and enforcement mechanisms. Look for future opportunities to contribute constructively to this community conversation.
- The Township Board will revisit the issue of a new Civil Infraction Ordinance (CIO). A public hearing held on September 30th generated public input to be considered before any next steps are taken. A civil infraction ordinance is a tool that the Michigan Township Association recommends for ordinance enforcement, and many local governments utilize a CIO to help achieve compliance without incurring costly legal fees.
- Whitewater Township has two primary buildings that provide services to township residents. These include the Township Hall and Fire Station. Both buildings are old with various levels of obsolescence and challenges. Decisions are needed about the best path forward in terms of new and/or renovated facilities. These decisions are central to the delivery of public services, and steps forward will likely include some public outreach to consider alternative scenarios and determine the best course of action.

Mark Your Calendar

## ANNUAL TOWNSHIP CLEANUP DAY 2026

WHEN: SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026  
WHERE: MILL CREEK ACADEMY- OLD M-72