



# Whitewater Township

## Newsletter



This Newsletter can be found on the Township Website: [whitewatertownship.org](http://whitewatertownship.org)



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[Supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com](mailto:Supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com)

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#### TREASURER

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#### PARKS & RECREATION

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[parksmanager7@gmail.com](mailto:parksmanager7@gmail.com)

#### PLANNING COMMISSION

Rachel Steelman - Chair  
[rsteelmanpc@yahoo.com](mailto:rsteelmanpc@yahoo.com)

#### HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Luann Snider, Chair  
231-883-3193  
[historical@whitewatertownship.org](mailto:historical@whitewatertownship.org)

#### GT COUNTY RD COMM

231-922-4848



## MASTER PLAN UPDATE - Thank You For Participating

The process leading us toward an updated Master Plan reached an important milestone in November with the conclusion of the public outreach phase of our planning process. Since the spring, the focus has been on steps to reach out to residents to learn and understand attitudes toward important planning issues facing Whitewater Township. Three specific steps were undertaken. The first step was a community survey conducted in June that aimed to reach all residents with important questions. Surveys were mailed out, and online options were also provided. The response to this was excellent. More than 600 surveys were returned, and much was learned.

Community surveys are a great way to reach all residents. However, surveys typically allow only a limited number of questions, and there are no opportunities for in-person conversations and follow-up questions. In September, an open house was held at Mill Creek School. Nearly 100 people attended. Attendees reviewed information, asked questions, and had good conversations about development trends, future growth and development, redevelopment, and preservation.

Building on the survey and open house, a planning workshop was held on November 7. About 50 people attended. This event allowed participants to consider possible township goals and implementation and encouraged new ideas. Informative conversations occurred in small groups, and each group reported its findings and conclusions. Groups were also asked to consider priorities for action steps necessary to achieve potential community goals. Feedback received in written evaluations was positive and complimentary.

All three public outreach efforts provided valuable information in different ways. This information is available for download at <https://www.whitewatertownship.org/planning-commission.html>. Each outreach method has inherent benefits and limitations, but in combination, they help paint a more complete picture of what Whitewater Township residents want. It should also be noted that while the formal public participation phase of the planning process is over, you can still weigh in on planning issues. Each Planning Commission meeting has opportunities for in-person public comments, and of course, written comments are welcome anytime.

So, what's next? The Planning Commission has begun the plan development phase of the process and plans to have a draft Master Plan done by April 2024. It will be a document that is clear, easy to read, and understandable. Once we have a draft, we must follow an adoption process defined by state law. This process affords more opportunities for public review and comment. We encourage residents to continue to monitor this planning process and stay engaged.



### CALENDAR

#### JANUARY

- 1/01 New Year's Day
- 1/03 Planning Commission
- 1/09 Township Board
- 1/16 Park & Rec Advisory
- 1/25 ZBA

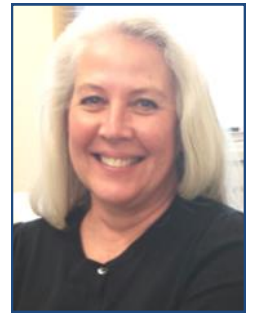
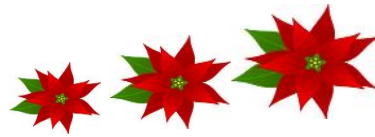
#### FEBRUARY

- 2/07 Planning Commission
- 2/13 Township Board
- 2/19 President's Day
- 2/20 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 2/22 ZBA

#### MARCH

- 3/06 Planning Commission
- 3/12 Township Board
- 3/19 Park & Rec. Advisory
- 3/28 ZBA

# "Details, Details" . . . From the Clerk



## Greetings, Whitewater Township Residents and Property Owners

Hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving! And congratulations to all the successful deer hunters!

Soon it will be Christmas, New Years Eve, and the start of the 2024 election season. There will be at least three elections next year:

- Presidential Primary on February 27
- State and Local Primary on August 6
- General Election on November 5

There is a May election date available, but it would only be triggered by a group placing an issue on the ballot or the need to fill an elected position.

**NEW for 2024 is the *option*** for all voters to "early vote." Early voting means going to a designated location during the specified early voting period, receiving a ballot, voting the ballot while there and feeding it into a tabulator. The Michigan Constitution now requires a minimum of nine days of early voting, minimum eight hours each of those days, in advance of any state or federal election.

Not every township has the facilities and staffing necessary to conduct early voting. Throughout Grand Traverse County, early voting locations have been set up through municipal agreements for election services to provide all county voters with a place to early vote. ***The early voting location for Whitewater Township voters is the East Bay Township Hall, 1965 N Three Mile Road, Traverse City*** (west of the Oleson's shopping center). East Bay Township, Peninsula Township, Acme Township, and Union Township's voters will also be early voting at the East Bay Township Hall.

Early voting begins two Saturdays before an election and continues every day thereafter through the last Sunday before an election. For the February 27 Presidential Primary, the East Bay Township Hall will be open the following dates and times for early voting:

**Saturday, 2/17 through Sunday, 2/25 - 8 am to 4 pm every day**

Voters do not have to early vote. Those who would rather vote via absent voter ballot will still be able to do so. Voters may also vote on Election Day, as they have in the past, from 7 am to 8 pm at the Whitewater Township Hall.

**ALSO NEW for 2024** is the Permanent ***Absent Voter Ballot List***, which will eventually take the place of the Permanent ***Absent Voter List***. The Michigan Constitution now makes it possible for a voter to submit one application and receive a ballot for all future elections. When receiving an application for absent voter ballot, make sure to review your options. If you feel that the Permanent Absent Voter Ballot is right for you, complete the application by checking the box to join the Permanent Absent Voter Ballot List. Make sure to sign and date where appropriate. This is not mandatory and may not be appropriate for each voter's situation. You may request in writing, which must include your signature, to be removed from the list at any time. If you are going to temporarily be away for an upcoming election, it is your responsibility to notify the clerk's office to send the absent voter ballot to a different address. ***Ballots are non-forwardable through postal mail.*** If you move within the State of Michigan and update your voter registration address, your status on the Permanent Absent Voter Ballot List will remain with you at your new Michigan location.

**Also in 2024, the terms of all township officials end in November (supervisor, clerk, treasurer and two trustee positions). After January 1, the township clerk's office will accept nominating petitions to run for township office. Signature requirements are minimal, or a \$100 fee can be paid in lieu of obtaining petition signatures. Appropriate forms can be obtained from the Township Clerk's office or the County Clerk's office. All filings must take place at the Township Clerk's office. The deadline to file the required paperwork to run for township office is April 23, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. Please feel free to call our office with questions.**

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

***Cheryl A. Goss***  
Whitewater Township Clerk



***Terese Hooper***  
Deputy Clerk



## Supervisor's - Winter 2023, Neighbors and Friends



Whitewater Township Fire Department has taken delivery of a new Dodge Ram Truck that will replace the current 1969 AM General unit used as wildland fire apparatus. The new unit will serve the community for many years. Fire Chief Flynn has placed a new fire engine on order with CSI Emergency Apparatus of Grayling. The truck and equipment represent nearly a \$550K purchase for the taxpayers. Delivery is expected in 2025 and will replace the current engine.

Park Manager Andrew Butler has done a wonderful job during Whitewater Township Park's 2023 camping and boat season. Thank you to him and all of the staff for a safe and successful year! Post season park maintenance continues in an attempt to catch up on numerous overdue needs. Mr. Butler will be reviewing the overall operational process with an eye towards technology to improve reservations and the overall park experience for 2024. Some ideas for the next park project are a new ranger station, bathhouse, and electrical service upgrades.

The Planning Commission continues the work on the Master Plan. Thank you to the residents that have participated in surveys, and/or attended the two workshops. If you missed the events, you can always provide written comment to the Planning Commission via email, or good old U.S. Mail at any time. It is never too late to get involved. Thank you to all of the folks working to update this plan. When finished, the Master Plan will guide our future development.

The Park & Recreation Advisory Committee has started working on a trail improvement project highlighted in the Recreation Plan. The group is looking to improve the Lossie Road Nature Trail with a boardwalk over stretches of wet areas and replacing a foot bridge over Battle Creek. Thank you to Committee Chair Melissa Melton and Committee Member Amber Voice for submitting a successful ARPA grant request to Grand Traverse County (GTC) for some of the project funding. After receiving the award, GTC released its "rules" for the money. While based on Federal Purchasing Guidelines, the County has added a few other covenants. The Board has until December 11, 2023 to get these nailed down or lose the funding.

The Whitewater Township Park Expansion project is complete. The fall rains caused a significant erosion issue in a couple of key areas. It appears a formal stormwater plan was not part of the original design which we are now attempting to address after the fact. Moving forward, the Township would be best served utilizing an engineer representing our best interests before approving any design for bidding purposes. Board Members are simply not well equipped to interpret complicated design elements that are a part of every design project.

In early 2024, Whitewater Township will begin migrating email hosting and services to a .gov (dot gov) domain. This should be a seamless transition for the most part, but you will begin to notice multiple email addresses for a few months to complete the process. The Township needs folks to serve on various boards and commissions. If you have any interest in local governance, please call me at 231.267.5151 Ext. 23 or via email at [supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com](mailto:supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com)

*Ron Popp*

Whitewater Township Supervisor



## Winter Greetings from Whitewater Township Fire Department



Some exciting news from the fire department this year. We were finally able to sign a contract with CSI Emergency Apparatus to build a new fire engine that will replace our current 21-year-old truck. The new fire engine will be constructed on a Freightliner chassis and will be very similar to the Tanker Truck that was purchased in 2020. Unfortunately, the new truck will not be delivered until mid-2025, but we are excited to have the process underway. The last five years have been busy with replacing aging equipment which has been a difficult undertaking. With the help of our Township Board, we continue to make forward progress while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

I would like to welcome to our team one new employee. Samantha M. joins us with fire and EMS certifications already in place so she will be able to get right to work. Her training and experience will no doubt be an asset to Whitewater Township.

Please remember to check your smoke alarms and the smoke alarms of your loved ones this winter. As of November 11, 2023, Michigan has had 99 fire related fatalities in 91 fires with careless smoking as the leading cause of these fires. Many of these fatalities occurred because of absent or non-functioning smoke alarms. Also remember, in addition to regular battery replacement, smoke alarms need to be replaced every 10 years and carbon monoxide alarms need to be replaced every 7 years. Winter months and the holiday season brings additional fire safety concerns. If you need help with smoke alarms, or any other safety tips, please contact the Whitewater Township Fire Department. Thank you and be safe!

*Brandon Flynn - Fire Chief*



[facebook.com/whitewaterFD](https://facebook.com/whitewaterFD)





## Treasurer's Corner



**Ardella M. Benak**  
Treasurer



**Lois MacLean**  
Deputy Treasurer

We would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!  
From our families to yours,  
we're wishing you a safe and joyous holiday season.

### Dates to Remember.....

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| ⇒ Winter Tax bills due without interest by . . . . .                             | 2/14/2024 |
| ⇒ A 1% interest each month for delinquent Winter Taxes starting . . . . .        | 2/15/2024 |
| ⇒ <b>Summer 2023 Deferment</b> must be paid by . . . . .                         | 2/14/2024 |
| ⇒ A 3% penalty will be assessed on delinquent taxes starting . . . . .           | 2/15/2024 |
| ⇒ Last day to pay your property taxes at Whitewater Township Hall . . . . .      | 2/28/2024 |
| ⇒ Delinquent 2023 Real Property taxes are turned over to GT County . . . . .     | 3/01/2024 |
| ⇒ A 4% penalty plus a 1% interest fee will be assessed by GTC starting . . . . . | 3/01/2024 |



**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. Thank you for your understanding in this matter. The township does not accept credit card payments. After March 1, 2024, 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.***

### WT Fire Department Fundraiser



**Hurry Limited supply available for Christmas**

Pink T-shirts \$25 and blue & gray Hoodies for \$45, available hoodie sizes adult Lg & XL. T-shirt vary. Contact FF Mike @ [msteph09@yahoo.com](mailto:msteph09@yahoo.com). Thank you for your support.

### WESA - 2nd Annual Taco Dinner

Mark your calendar, May 11, 2024 is the WESA Taco Dinner and Silent Auction fundraiser. Bring your family and your appetite.

\*\*\* NEW NEW NEW \*\*\*

#### ZOOM Videos Now on Township Website

You can now go to the Township's web page to view archived zoom meetings for all boards, commissions and subcommittees recorded meetings using zoom for 2022 and 2023. Click: [Whitewater Township Zoom Meeting Archives](#)

### December Board of Review (DBOR) 12/12/23 3pm

The Whitewater Township Board of Review will meet on Tuesday, December 12 at 3:00 pm for the purpose of correcting clerical errors or mutual mistake of fact. They will **NOT** be hearing valuation appeals at this meeting.

Dawn Kuhns, Assessor  
231-409-1827

## PARKS & RECREATION - 2023, A Year to be Grateful

### A Year to be grateful:

In 2023 we have made progress to improve our township park and recreation properties and are very thankful to have received awards of funding to make even more strides in the future.

- Completed the re-opening of Hi-Pray Playground
- Finalized all the tree clean-up on BCNA and Lossie Trails
- Park Boat Launch Expansion Project is wrapping up
- We were awarded \$95,917 from Grand Traverse County in ARPA grant funds to improve Lossie Road Nature Trail
- Approved to use \$81,125 from the local ARPA Funds toward Recreation projects (due to the public support for recreation trails/properties in recent surveys)



**We continue to work on improvements like Lossie & BCNA trail improvements, baseball field bleacher upgrades, playground equipment upgrades and many more. Thank you for your support and have a blessed Holiday Season!**

*Melissa Melton - PRAC Chairperson*

