



Whitewater Township Winter 2014 Newsletter

Questions, comments, ideas for future stories
or to be added to our monthly E-mail letter
subscription contact

Della Benak at: Treasurer@whitwatertownship.org

Township Calendar

- 12/2 Tree Lighting Ceremony
- 12/3 Planning Commission
- 12/8 Park & Rec.
- 12/9 Township Board
- 12/10 Historical Society
- 12/10 Dec. Board of Review
- 12/18 ZBA

Directory

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

www.WhitewaterTownship.org

SUPERVISOR

Ron Popp ext. 23

Supervisor@whitwatertownship.org

CLERK

Cheryl Goss ext. 24

P.O. Box 159

Hours: M thru F 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Clerk@whitwatertownship.org

TREASURER

Ardella Benak ext. 22

P.O. Box 100

Hours: M-W-F 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Treasurer@whitwatertownship.org

TRUSTEE

Lloyd Lawson - Message 231-267-5141

Trustee01@whitwatertownship.org

TRUSTEE

Paul Hubbell - Message 231-267-5141

Trustee02@whitwatertownship.org

PLANNING & ZONING

Dennis Habledank ext. 21

Hours: Mondays 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Zoning@whitwatertownship.org

ASSESSOR

Dawn Plude-Kuhns - 231-409-1827

1st & 3rd Tuesdays 9-Noon

assessordawn@gmail.com

FIRE & AMBULANCE

Fire Hall 231-267-5969

Non-Emergency

PARKS & RECREATION

Township Park - 231-267-5091

PLANNING COMMISSION

Mickey Dean, Chair

231-409-1293

Mickeydean@att.com

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Luann Snider, Chair

231-883-3193

GT COUNTY RD COMM

231-922-4848

Supervisor - Ron Popp

Greetings Residents,

With the November mid-term elections now over, the voters of Whitewater Township have opted to fund a redesigned ambulance service that moves away from the volunteer based services of its roots. This historic event begins a new chapter of the Whitewater Township Ambulance Service and is now a part of our community's legacy. I want to thank everyone who assisted the Township Board in this process and a special word of thanks to the voters!

The margin of support for this important service was very slim, just 46 votes, underscoring the work left for us in building confidence in government run services with the taxpayer. Achieving the confidence goal will require the ambulance service to function as a business, rather than a government entity, with strong leadership focused on striking a workable balance between services provided and costs. Your Township Board is up to the challenge.

Fire Station update: Since the June 2014 Town Hall Meeting, we have been working with Grand Traverse Rural Fire Department Chief, Theo Weber, to determine what role the Township has in the operation of the fire department. Paraphrasing a 1996 agreement between Whitewater Township and Grand Traverse Rural Fire Department, the Township granted to Rural Fire all powers granted by statute to a township fire board. Additionally, Rural Fire shall have the power to acquire, construct, manage, maintain or operate buildings. Using this authority, Chief Weber and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians are working together to bring a new fire station to the area. We owe both groups a big thank you, and look forward to an official announcement soon.

The 2015/2016 budget planning cycle will begin soon and there is much work to do. Did you know, out of 16 taxing authorities in Grand Traverse County, Whitewater Township has the LOWEST operational allocation? That is why one of the first actions this administration took was to install some very strict budget cost control measures. Yes, it hurts when the belt is tightened, and it forced us to distinguish between need and want. Happily, the combined efforts of all Township Personnel and Departments has resulted in a healthy General Fund savings account.

Roads: I will ask the Township Board to set aside One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) of this savings account money to begin road repairs. I have also notified the Grand Traverse County Road Commission of this intent so we can take full advantage of their cost share program, potentially doubling the money. It is still a small percentage of what we need to fix township roads, but it is a noteworthy effort of which we can be proud of.

Happy Holidays to you and your family.

In your service.

Ron Popp
Whitewater Township Supervisor



"Details, Details" ... From The Clerk

Another winter season is upon us, one which arrived a little too early for my liking, but I'm sure the hunters and winter sports enthusiasts don't mind. Another cup of hot chocolate for me, please!

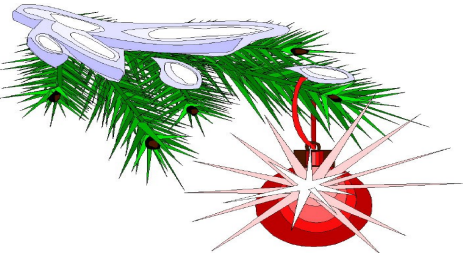
We had another very busy year in the Clerk's office. Deputy Clerk Terese Hooper continued to provide valuable assistance with the numerous duties this office is responsible for. We also had 3 elections in 2014. Turnout for the November 4 election was the highest so far at 1,132 voters, a 52% turnout. Voters who came into the township hall in November noticed that we had a new layout for the precinct, one which provided room for additional voting booths as well as more room for voters to wait inside the building before obtaining their ballot. Many voters appreciated this and commented positively.

Whitewater Township Park had another successful season in 2014 with many campers and boaters enjoying the facility. Once we got past an initial glitch (due to an error in my office), the new online reservation system worked beautifully! I would like to extend sincere appreciation to local residents Jim Sundberg of BrickHouse Interactive and Tim Maylone with Cherry Capital Connection for their assistance. Jim spent many hours investigating reservation programs that would fit the needs of Whitewater Township Park and then spent many more hours providing technical assistance and training. Tim and his company were responsible for providing the first-ever secure Internet service to the ranger station. Having the ability to book campground reservations online is more convenient for campers and greatly decreases the amount of time park rangers spend on this task. Thank you to Jim and Tim for making it all happen!

Nearly every day I receive at least one call or e-mail from a township resident who has a question about a township-related issue or is looking for information. It has been a pleasure these past two years to help people find the information they are looking for, and I again thank you for allowing me this opportunity to serve the Whitewater Township Community.

May all of your travels this winter be safe, and I wish everyone a joyous holiday season!

Cheryl Goss



DISABLED VETERANS PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. Exemption is only available to disabled veterans or, if the veteran has died, to their un-remarried surviving spouse who owns and uses the home as their homestead.
2. Must be honorably discharged.
3. Has a certificate from the VA certifying that they have received pecuniary assistance for Adapted Housing grant program. **OR**
4. Has been determined by the VA to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of Military service and is entitled to veterans benefits at the 100 per centum rate. **OR**
5. Rated by the VA as Individually Unemployable.
6. Veterans need to apply after January 1st each year for the exemption. An exemption will cancel the July and December property taxes.

WHAT STEPS TO TAKE

1. Obtain a **Disabled Veterans Exemption Affidavit** from your Township Assessor.
2. Fill out and take Affidavit to the Grand Traverse Co. Department of Veterans Affairs office (VA). You may want to call for an appointment (231-995-6070). Take your letter of **SUMMARY OF BENEFITS** with you to your appointment.
3. The VA will issue you a **Certificate of Eligibility**. Provide a copy to the Township Assessor.

Call Assessor Dawn Kuhns at 231-409-1827 or email: assessordawn@gmail.com



5th Annual Whitewater Township Christmas Tree Lighting Tuesday, December 2nd at 6:00

The evening will start at 6:00 pm across from the Fire Station in Hi Pray Park with joyful music and light refreshments, followed by a countdown to light the tree and a visit by Santa.



Don't miss a Visit with Santa!

Santa arrives on the fire truck with lights flashing and horns blowing to place the first ribbon on the tree for Peace.

Everyone visiting Santa will get a small gift and an opportunity for photos.



HONORING OUR VETERANS

We dedicate the Community Christmas Tree to all the men and women past and present and the families who have made the sacrifices in service to our country. At the time of the lighting, we invite each family that would like to place a ribbon on the tree in honor of their Military family member to come forward. Ribbons will be available. You may bring your own ribbons decorated any way you would like.

We consider it a privilege to honor your loved ones!

REMINDERS

It's that time of year to change the batteries and test your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.



Snow can weigh heavily on your roof. Be sure to remove ice & snow buildup from your roof.

IT'S BACK !!!

Watch for the spring newsletter for information on the 2015 Spring Clean-up day!



RecycleSmart.info

The next county household hazardous waste collection is scheduled for late March 2015. RecycleSmart Hotline: 941-5555



39th Annual Halloween Party HUGE Success !



What a success with a turnout of 300+ spookers. Everyone enjoyed perfect weather for the Haunted Hayride. Last year the hayride was cancelled due to bad weather. Happy to say we utilized four wagons this year and made many spookers happy.

Next year is the 40th Anniversary for the Halloween Party. Our hopes are that we will be in the NEW Station and combining a Grand Opening with this wonderful event!

An outstanding community effort makes this type of event successful. *We are very fortunate to have enthusiastic volunteers and the donations of local businesses.* Whitewater Emergency Services Personnel and Whitewater Emergency Services Auxiliary members want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the **many volunteers** and local contributing businesses that make this event possible.

THANK YOU!

The Irish Family
Wilson Plumbing
Orchard View Farms
New Hope Church
American Business Solutions

Gmoser's
The Sweet Shop
Mary Harshfield
Clare & Elaine Ray
Ace Hardware (Acme)

Top of the Line Crane Service
East Bay Pizza
Send Brothers Farm Market
Acme Business Association
Renee's House of Quilting

Board of Review (BOR)

DECEMBER 10, 2014 - 5:30pm



December Board of Review (BOR) has the authority over clerical errors, mutual mistakes of fact and situations involving hardship exemptions, principal residence exemptions and qualified agricultural exemptions. Valuation disputes are handled only during the July Board of Review.

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

ZONING

Zoning Administrator Dennis Habedank has taken a full time position at Blair Township. He will be available in Whitewater Township on Mondays only.

Thank you, Denny, for all your professional assistance

during another busy season!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED !

The Whitewater Township Board is accepting applications from residents who would be interested in serving on the following Township Boards and Commissions:

Planning Commission - an advisory body to the Township Board on land use planning; three-year term of office; meets monthly with additional special meetings.

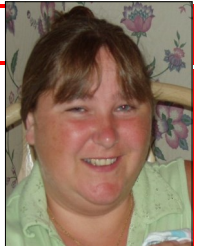
Zoning Board of Appeals - a body that provides the first step in the zoning appeal process; three-year term of office; meets as needed.

Board of Review - a body that reviews the assessment of real property; two-year term of office; meets March, July and December.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee - an advisory body to the Township Board on Parks & Recreation planning; three-year term; meets monthly.

Please address all letters of application/interest and any questions to Ron Popp, Supervisor@whitewatertownship.org (231) 267-5141 ext. 23

Treasurer's Corner - Ardella Benak



The Treasurer's office has been very busy getting ready for the second half of tax season and getting the Winter Newsletter produced. This time of year is busy for everyone, family gatherings, holiday shopping and school programs. It's also the time of year that thinking about others less fortunate than ourselves is what we as a community do. As an active member of Williamsburg Emergency Services Auxiliary (WESA) I wanted to extend an invitation to join the auxiliary. One of WESA's duties is to stock the fire and ambulance crews with Quick Response kits, water, Gatorade, granola bars and other high energy snacks. If you're looking for a way to help but you don't have the time to commit to being a member and you're not sure what you can do, WESA is taking donations for any of the items listed above. It is all very much appreciated. You can drop it off at the Fire Station on Old M-72 Monday - Friday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and to invite you, on December 2nd at 6:00 pm, to Christmas in the Park Tree Lighting Event. It is a wonderful way to kick off the season's festivities with family and friends. Enjoy your holidays and we'll see you at budget time :)

Ardella M. Benak

Dates to Remember.....

Winter Tax bills due without interest by	2/17/2015
A 1% interest each month for delinquent Winter Taxes starting	2/18/2015
Summer 2014 Deferment must be paid by	2/17/2015
A 3% penalty will be assessed on delinquent taxes starting	2/18/2015
Last day to pay your property taxes at Whitewater Township Hall	3/02/2015
Delinquent 2014 Real Property taxes are turned over to GT County	3/03/2015
A 4% penalty plus a 1% interest fee will be assessed by GTC starting on	3/03/2015

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. Treasurer's office **accepts postmarks**. Payments mailed must be postmarked by February 17, 2015, to not incur penalty & interest fees.

Partial payments are accepted. When paying by **CASH**, please have the **exact amount** of your tax bill. I thank you for your understanding in this matter. After March 2, 2015, please call Grand Traverse County Treasurer's office for the correct payoff amount due at 231-922-4535.

Please contact me if you have any questions, I am always happy to help.