



Whitewater Township Winter 2013 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

- 12/3 Tree Lighting Ceremony
- 12/4 Planning Commission
- 12/9 Park & Rec.
- 12/10 Township Board
- 12/11 Historical Society
- 12/11 Dec Board of Review
- 12/19 ZBA (None Scheduled)

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 Habedank ext. 21
Hours: M-W-F 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,

I hope everyone was able to enjoy the summer, because by the way it looks outside today, winter is here!

Your elected officials, along with Fire, EMS, and Park Rangers, have been hard at work, over the past year, tackling issues one after another. I am proud of their efforts and abilities in planning, preparing, and completing tasks as a team. Thank you to all. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new Zoning Administrator, Dennis Habedank. Dennis's background in zoning, and law enforcement, will serve our community well. Stop by Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays and say hello.

The new Township website design has been successfully rolled out. Look for the expanded capabilities of this tool to enhance our ability to communicate with one another in the near future.

Phase 1 of the Williamsburg North natural gas project has, for the most part, been completed. Many of the Township residents now enjoy the comfort and savings of natural gas. What neighborhood is next?

Improving local road conditions remains one of this administration's top priorities. Using our Road Maintenance and Replacement Fund, along with other revenue sources, we hope to equitably share in Road Commission's new "Road Improvement Proposal." Having township funds readily available to combine with Road Commission dollars will help with the needed road repairs.

Grand Traverse Rural Fire Department has a new Chief, Theo Weber. The new leader of Rural Fire, to which our township belongs, comes to us from the Traverse City Fire Department. We wish him well! Closer to home, the Whitewater Township Board will be reviewing a couple of different strategies, aimed at reducing stresses our local emergency first responders deal with daily. One topic co-proposed by Williamsburg Fire Station No. 3 Captain, Tim Arbenowske, and Whitewater Township Ambulance Coordinator, Dawn Martin, will address improving our current compensation policy for these important individuals. Recognizing the immense burden carried by those people, who drop everything at a moment's notice to answer our calls for help, is another top priority of this administration. Remember, please take a moment to thank an emergency service person, and a veteran, next time you see them.

Happy Holidays!

Ron Popp
Whitewater Township Supervisor

"Details, Details" ... From The Clerk

Greetings Township Residents/Property Owners –

Hope this finds all of you healthy, prosperous, and enjoying fall/winter in Northern Michigan. We were fortunate to have mild temperatures in September and October this year, but it looks like winter has arrived!

Have you been on the new township website yet? The site went live in September and looks great! JS Interactive, now known as Brick House Interactive, a local Williamsburg company, did a great job on it. The site is now mobile device friendly and we have more room to upload documents to the site. As you may have noticed, there are some files that did not come over from the old website and we hope to get that information restored to the site soon.

It's been a busy election season in this "off year." The Clerk's office has conducted 3 elections in 2013. Elk Rapids Schools has requested a recount of the November bond proposal. The recount will take place in early December. I'll let you know via the website how it turns out.

Whitewater Township Park's 2013 season was very successful! Lots of "happy campers" and boaters used the facility. We are hoping to have credit card capability in place by April 1 for camping reservations and for use at the ranger station when the park opens in May. The public is conducting the majority of their transactions via debit/credit cards as opposed to cash or checks nowadays.

Well, it's been a year now since I took office. There's been a lot to learn and I have to say it has gone well and that I have very much enjoyed helping residents and others who call or stop in at the Township Hall looking for information. Thank you to the Whitewater Township Community for the opportunity to serve!

Wishing all of you a safe and delightful holiday season!

Cheryl Goss

DISABLED VETERANS PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION BILL (SB 352) SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER ON NOVEMBER 12, 2013

Michigan is home to nearly 700,000 veterans and state agencies are working to help ease their transition from military to civilian life and to provide veterans access to the critical resources they need to succeed now that they have come back home. This legislation improves the current property tax exemption by streamlining the process and guaranteeing this benefit for these veterans and their spouses.

This exemption is only available to disabled veterans or, if the veteran has died, to their un-remarried surviving spouses who own and use the home as their homestead. The disabled veteran or their surviving spouse must be a resident of the State of Michigan, be honorably discharged and the VA has determined to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of Military service. Must have benefits at the 100% rate or rated as Unemployable.

This new tax exemption eases the cost of home ownership for military veterans. Whitewater Township is trying to help the veterans in the community become aware of the change in the law. Because this law is so new, we have found that many of the veterans we've talked to are unaware of the change. If you know of a Veteran or a surviving spouse that may not be aware of this NEW law and could benefit from it, please let them know to call us here at the Township. We will be happy to help.

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. If eligible for 2013 exemption, you may apply at the **DECEMBER 11, 2013**, Board of Review. An exemption will cancel the July and December 2013 taxes.

What steps to take

1. Obtain a **Disabled Veterans Exemption Affidavit** from your township Treasurer, Assessor or on the Website.
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.
4. Request to be added to the December Board of Review (BOR), December 11, 2013, to have your 2013 property taxes exempted. Call Assessor Dawn Kuhns at 231-409-1827 or email: assessordawn@gmail.com
5. Bring with you to the BOR your Certificate of Eligibility.

4th Annual Whitewater Township Christmas Tree Lighting

Tuesday, December 3rd at 6:30 PM

The evening will start at 6:30 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.

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. However, you may bring your own ribbons decorated any way you would like. We consider it a privilege to honor your loved ones!

Don't miss a Visit with Santa!



Deal-Ridgeway American Legion Post 289 of Williamsburg

DONATES \$300 TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT



L to R: WESA Chairman Pat Miller, MSGT Tommy Baggs, David Stoops, Earl Ashmore, Vaughn Harshfield

In appreciation to Captain Arbenowske and all members of the Whitewater Fire Department for supporting the Williamsburg American Legion Post 289's Memorial Day Parade, MSGT Tommy Baggs presents a check to Whitewater Emergency Services Auxiliary (WESA) Chairman Pat Miller for \$300. This donation, along with two life jackets and 50' of rope, is to complete restoration of a rescue boat that was donated for use in case of an emergency on any of our local waterways.

2014 WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY AND VETERANS FLAGS

The American Legion Post #289 has long conducted a Memorial Day Ceremony honoring our Fallen Heroes. With only 4 or 5 active members, they could not gather enough members to conduct the 2013 Memorial Day Ceremony and had to recruit a Township Fireman and a private citizen to complete the Color Guard.

It was briefly considered to stop doing the Memorial Day Ceremony, but that idea was rejected in hopes of recruiting a few volunteers to start a Whitewater Township Color Guard. Color Bearers could be past or present Boy Scouts, Eagle Scouts or Servicemen willing and able to participate. The Color Guard will form in April and May, 2014. (See below for contact information) Working together, we can save this ceremony for our Township and to continue honoring our Fallen Heroes.

As an additional service to Whitewater Township veterans, if you have a military loved one buried in the Williamsburg Cemetery or in the Circle Hill Cemetery and there is not a US Flag honoring the grave site, please email: amlegionpost289@aol.com with a copy of their DD214 or mail to the American Legion Post 289, PO Box 32, Williamsburg, MI 49690.

2014 Scholarship for ERHS Seniors

Post 289 announces their second scholarship program for 2014. The scholarship program is open to children and grandchildren of military personnel who have served honorably in the United States Military and are seniors at Elk Rapids High School. Three one-time scholarships are being offered: one for \$1000 and two for \$500 each. All scholarships are for full-time students for use on college expenses such as tuition, books, lab fees and school supplies. Scholarship applications are available in the counselor's office at Elk Rapids High School. Applications must be returned to a counselor by March 10, 2014. Applicants will be judged on academic accomplishments, financial need, school and community activities, leadership skills, and their overall capability of succeeding at the college level.





Welcome NEW Zoning Administrator

My name is Denny Habedank and I'm excited to be working for Whitewater Township as the new Zoning Administrator. I graduated from Traverse City Senior High School (Central) in 1969. My background includes Criminal Justice, Treasury Management, Zoning and Code Enforcement. My wife of forty-three years was born and raised on the Old Mission Peninsula. We have three grown children and eight grand-children, five of whom live in Missouri with our oldest child.

At this time, my office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. I can be reached at the Township Hall by calling (231) 267-5141 Ext. 21, or on my cell phone (231) 590-6890. I look forward to meeting you and working with you on your future projects and concerns.

Denny Habedank

DECEMBER 11, 2013 Board of Review (BOR)

December Board of Reviews (BOR) has the authority over clerical errors, mutual mistakes of fact and situations involving hardship exemptions, principal residence exemptions and qualified agricultural exemptions.

Please contact Township Assessor Dawn Kuhns at 231-409-1827 to make an appointment for December.

38th Annual Halloween Party HUGE Success !

What a spectacular success with a turnout of an estimated 350 spookers, young and young at heart. 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. Show your support by shopping local!

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The Irish Family | GNS Audio | Gmoser's | Top of the Line Crane Service |
| Tree Top Mike | The Sweet Shop | East Bay Pizza | Hoxie Farm Market |
| Orchard View Farms | Mary Harshfield | Swanny's Market | Send Brothers Farm Market |
| Ginop Sales | Clare & Elaine Ray | Turtle Creek Casino | Acme Business Association |
| Northwestern Bank | Classic Farm Equipment | AIS Construction | Renee's House of Quilting |
| 104.5 The BOB-FM | Rog's Garage | Grand Traverse Plastics | Yorkburg Manor B&B |
| Mr. C's Pub & Grill | Bayview Inn | Ace Hardware (Acme) | Down By The Creek Daycare |
| Northwoods Soda | | | American Business Solutions |

Treasurer's Corner - Ardella Benak



This last year has flown by so quickly. It's hard to believe this is my 5th year being your Township Treasurer. I have been very blessed but busy with many treasurer duties and township board assigned responsibilities. I serve as the Board Rep. on the Parks & Rec Advisory Committee. Thanks to a lot hard work from all committee members we are very near completion of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Some very challenging issues came before us at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The ZBA has heard 5 cases this year. The Township Board meetings have been well attended. It is good to see so many citizens taking an interest in our township. I would like to thank my Deputy, Lois MacLean, for her assistance in creating, editing and printing of this Newsletter. The task would be daunting on my own.

As a member of the Whitewater Emergency Services Auxiliary, I have been busy with many exciting events in our community. September's Spaghetti Dinner was a huge success thanks to the Silent Auction and all that participated. Proceeds went to outfit the water rescue boat that was donated to the Emergency Services. October brought many excited kids of all ages to our Annual Halloween Party at the Fire Station, my contribution this year was indoor decorations and food. We hosted and fed dinner to 20 hungry Firemen at the Rural Fire Captains monthly meeting. It was very nice meeting Rural Fire's new Chief, Theo Weber.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and to invite you, on December 3rd at 6:30 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. My door is always open and if you have something on your mind and want to discuss it, I would be happy to put on a pot of coffee.

Ardella M. Benak

Winter Tax bills due without interest by	2/14/2014
A 1% interest each month for delinquent Winter Taxes starting	2/15/2014
Summer 2013 Deferment must be paid by	2/14/2014
A 3% penalty will be assessed on delinquent taxes starting	2/15/2014
Last day to pay your property taxes at Whitewater Township Hall	2/28/2014
Delinquent 2013 Real Property taxes are turned over to GT County	3/01/2014
A 4% penalty plus a 1% interest fee will be assessed by GTC starting on	3/01/2014

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 14, 2014, 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 1, 2014, please call Grand Traverse County Treasurer's office for the correct payoff amount due at 231-922-4535.

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