



NEWSLETTER

*To advance the quality of life of all residents through a commitment to responsible growth, and value-driven municipal services that promote the relationships among economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity.
(Adopted 2/14/2017)*

TOWNSHIP BOARD

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libbyhc@oshtemo.org

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dfarmer@oshtemo.org

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cbuszka@oshtemo.org

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Fire Chief Mark Barnes retires after 13+ years of service



It wasn't by chance that Chief Mark Barnes went into the fire service. He comes from a family of dedicated firefighters, including his father and grandfather. Chief Barnes

began his 48 year career of service with the United States Air Force in the 1970s. After returning from the military, he became a firefighter in Dowagiac, and then continued in Portage, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. He came to us in Oshtemo in 2008, providing us with over 13 years of excellent service

and unrivaled professionalism. In addition to being a leader in Oshtemo, Chief Barnes also took on many roles in the community, including President of the Kalamazoo County Fire Chiefs Association, membership with the Kalamazoo County Hazardous Materials Response Team Board, the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority, and advisor for the Fire Science program at KVCC, to name a few. We say goodbye to Chief Barnes with heavy hearts as he begins the next well-deserved chapter of his career— quality family time and hopeful some relaxation. Thank you, Chief Barnes, for a life well-spent and for sharing your talents with Oshtemo Township!

2022 Trash Day Schedule

9 AM – 3PM

March 26

April 16

April 23

May 7

June 25

July 30

August 27

September 24

October 29

November 5 – LEAVES ONLY

November 19 – trash/leaves

SHRED DAYS

10 am-NOON

May 14

September 17

Township Department Information

Assessor Kristine Biddle
216-5225 assessor@oshtemo.org

Fire Chief Mark Barnes
375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

Ordinance Officer Rick Suwarsky
216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org

Parks Director Karen High
216-5233 khigh@oshtemo.org (Rentals: 375-4260)

Planning Director Iris Lubbert
216-5223 ilubbert@oshtemo.org

Public Works Director Anna Horner
216-5236 ahorner@oshtemo.org



Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/oshtemochartertownship/> or sign up at www.oshtemo.org to join the email list



From Clerk Dusty Farmer—

This year will be busy for elections. We have a **Special Election on May 3**, which will include a County-wide law enforcement millage, a **Primary on August 2**, and a **General Election on November 8**.

If you are interested in becoming an election worker, please contact my office as soon as possible. Election workers must choose any state recognized political party, and they do not have to be registered with that party. Independent is not an option. We are in particular need of Republican election workers.

Deputy Clerk Melissa Rugg has been in her position since last year, and she has completed the required training from the Bureau of Elections to not only administer elections, but to also train new election workers. She is a great asset to the Township, and I encourage you to say “Hi!” if you see her in the office.

In other news, we are excited to announce that we will be launching a new website in May, and it will be an improved tool for the community to receive information about Township and regional activity. Feel free to send feedback as the new site rolls out.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions about elections, voting, registration, cemeteries, or Freedom of Information Act requests.

Dusty Farmer, Clerk
dfarmer@oshtemo.org
269-216-5224



From Treasurer Clare Buszka—

Our current tax season is now complete, and all late tax payments will have to be made at the Kalamazoo County Treasurer’s office downtown at 201 W. Kalamazoo Avenue, Room 104, Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

Summer Tax bills will be mailed the first week of July and must be paid before September 14, 2022 (postmarks will not be accepted).

We encourage you to mail your tax payment to 7275 West Main, Kalamazoo, MI, 49009, or make use of the convenient outside drop box in the Township Hall parking lot. Another option is to pay your taxes online by using the link on our website.

If you have questions or concerns about taxes, please contact my office as soon as possible so that we can better solve the problem or answer questions.

Clare Buszka, Treasurer
cbuszka@oshtemo.org



From Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell—

The days are warming... the Board continues work on priorities for use of the **Federal American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”) funds**. Input from the public is asked, anytime, as well as during upcoming meetings that unfold with this focus in April and May. Some ideas have already been received, including a request to expand broadband in the rural underserved areas of the Township. Send your ideas to libbyhc@oshtemo.org

Because of the new water contract with the City of Kalamazoo, the Township Board was able to reduce the **water service connection fees** somewhat. Further review will occur in coming months.

What’s happening with **public sewer expansion**? Certainly, a question on the minds of many. The litigation initiated by Mr. Graham on the Clerk’s decision regarding the insufficiency of the sewer petitions continues. We hope for a court decision in April. If the Township prevails the Township continues with the Phase I sewer expansion projects as planned. If Mr. Graham prevails the Township will shift gears and likely begin sewer expansion on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis. As conveyed previously, this is a more costly option. Unfortunately, two residents in the past three weeks have experienced the crisis of failing septic systems. They both reached out to the Township to understand if they can expect public sewer to be available, instead of rebuilding old dry well systems.

The Township Board voted to partly sponsor the **Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Office purchase of a virtual reality (VR) training system**. This vote expedited the purchase by one year. Given the number of newer officers, it made sense to the Board. Recruitment and training for additional County-wide deputies continues, following retirements and officer decisions to leave police work. Besides assisting with technical training, the Axon VR system provides additional role-playing opportunities not yet available, such as for mental health situations. Also related to Police Protection, the two additional Oshtemo deputies will be seated following the KCSO April ‘shift bid.’

A recruiting firm is selected, ESCI, to assist in identification of **fire chief candidates**.

GREAT news on the non-motorized path for KL Avenue! The Township received MDOT approval for \$1.7 million in Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant monies for the construction of the KL Ave path, from Drake Road west to the Paddock apartments. The path will be constructed on the north side of KL Ave and the timing for construction is coordinated with the 131-bridge reconstruction in 2024.

Last but not least, **many thanks to Civil Engineer Marc Elliott, retiring** from his position as Oshtemo Public Works Director. Marc served the community as a private sector consultant starting in 2002 and joined Oshtemo as a staff engineer in 2012. Although Marc is retiring from full time employment, the Township is fortunate he will continue part time starting April 1st.

Call or email anytime (libbyhc@oshtemo.org, 269-375-4260), or stop in during **Open Office Hours** to speak with the Supervisor, Monday May 2, from 3-5 pm.

Save the dates for Oshtemo's 'Music in the Park' concert series! Three free, family-friendly concerts will be held this summer at the Flesher Field gazebo, 3664 South 9th Street. Details will be announced via the Township website, Facebook, and Next Door. Contact Karen High, Parks Director, at khigh@oshtemo.org for more information.



Schlitz Creek Bluegrass Band
Sunday, June 26
6 – 7:30 pm



Michigan Nightingales
Sunday, July 10
6 – 7:30 pm



The Corn Fed Girls
Sunday, August 28
6 – 7:30 pm

More opportunities for spring and summer fun in Oshtemo Township Parks

Wiffleball League: Kalamazoo Wiffle League plays at Flesher Field and Oshtemo Township Park on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from **May through August**. Fee required; registration now open!

For more information, visit www.kzoowiffleball.com follow them on all social media platforms @kzoowiffleball, or email kalamazoowiffleleague@gmail.com

Soccer Shots: Soccer experience for children ages 2-8, held at Flesher Field on Tuesday evenings and Saturdays starting in April. Fee required. Visit <https://www.soccershots.com/kalamazoo/> for more information.

MacDudley's Mid-Summer Fest: A family-friendly renaissance faire to bring awareness to differences and disabilities, with live entertainment and shopping. **June 18 and 19** from 10 am-6 pm. Fee required. For more information, contact Bridget Ackley at bridget_ackley@rocketmail.com Hosted by MacDudley Dragon Entertainment.

Disc Golf Tournaments at Oshtemo Township Park:

Michigan Disc Golf Hall of Fame Classic, **May 21 and 22**. Fee required. For more information, contact Larry LaBond at KACES6903@gmail.com.

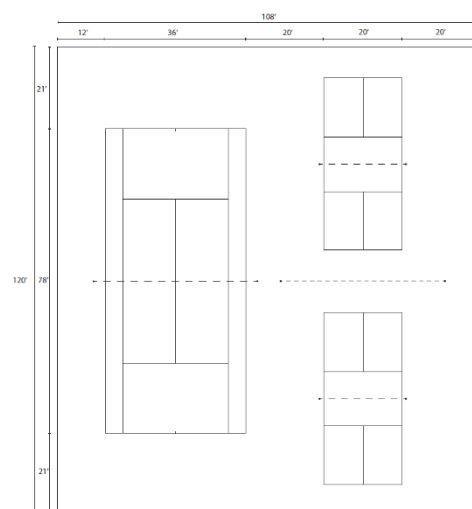
Sometimes Summer Solstice @Oshtemo, **June 18**. Fee required. For more information, contact Shea Abbey at greatlakesdisc@gmail.com

Tennis courts to be resurfaced, pickleball under consideration

GO! Green Oshtemo, our plan for parks and recreation, nonmotorized transportation, and conservation, recognizes the need for proper maintenance and continuous improvements to our active recreation areas. With this in mind, two tennis courts at Oshtemo Township Park, located behind the Township Hall at 7275 West Main Street, are scheduled to be resurfaced this summer. **The Parks Committee is considering revising the layout of the courts to provide two pickleball courts in place of one of the existing tennis courts.** (See sketch.) The local pickleball club has offered to pay the increased cost (approximately \$2,800 total).

Not familiar with pickleball? Considered one of the fastest-growing sports in the United States, pickleball is a paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong. The game can be played by two or four people at a time. Because the court is much smaller than a tennis court, it can be enjoyed by people who are less mobile. It is fairly easy to learn the rules of the game, making it appropriate for players of all ages and skill levels. And it is said to be fun and addictive.

The Parks Committee would like your feedback on whether to replace one existing tennis court with two pickleball courts or retain two tennis courts. Please email your comments to Karen High, Parks Director, at khigh@oshtemo.org or complete this online survey in less than two minutes: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WLBRBBC>



Proposed layout with one tennis court and two permanent pickleball courts.

What to expect from Spongy moths (*Lymantria dispar*, formerly Gypsy) in Oshtemo this summer

Last year's infestation of Spongy moths hit some parts of Oshtemo Township very hard. The large, hairy caterpillars fed on the leaves of many tree species, sometimes completely defoliating them. The resulting rain of frass (fecal pellets) from caterpillars in infested trees was extremely unpleasant.

Though the Spongy moths are expected to return this spring, there is some good news. According to Oshtemo Township resident and Western Michigan University Professor Emeritus Stephen Malcolm, the infestation is predicted to collapse and essentially disappear this summer. There are a variety of reasons for this: the population was hit hard last year by both a virus (LdNPV (*Lymantria dispar* nuclear polyhedrosis virus) and a fungus (*Entomophaga maimaiga*). In addition, many of the moth eggs were attacked by extraordinarily high numbers of a tiny chalcid wasp, known as an oencyrtid. And although we will have lots of larvae on our trees again this spring, the trees will better defend themselves this year through their own chemical defenses that protect from larval feeding.

More good news: Spongy moth larvae are a vital food source for many bird species - especially cuckoos (both black-billed and yellow-billed) which seem to like the hairy caterpillars. For this reason, Professor Malcolm **does not recommend spraying with pesticides**, which causes damage to the entire ecosystem and both poisons and starves migrating warblers and other birds.

If you'd like more information about dealing with Spongy moths, register for this free webinar by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources:

[“New Name, Familiar Pest”](#) (9 a.m. to 10 a.m., Thursday, April 14) Join an expert panel to explore how *Lymantria dispar* (formerly Gypsy moth) became a naturalized resident in Michigan's forests. Dr. Deborah McCullough from Michigan State University, Dr. Steven Katovich of the USDA Forest Service, Susie Iott of MDARD and DNR's James Wieferich will cover the unusual history of this pest in the United States and here in Michigan, and what you can do to reduce some of the unpleasant impacts of an outbreak. You'll learn tips to help stressed trees recover from defoliation and options to help reduce the nuisance around your home.

Registration: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDNR/bulletins/30a0936>
or call Joanne Foreman, (517) 284-5814



Lymantria dispar larva Photo by Jon Yuschock, Bugwood.org.



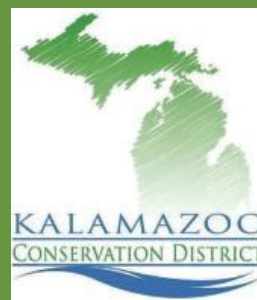
Yellow-billed cuckoo
Photo by allaboutbirds.org

Vote

May 3, 2022

visit www.michigan.gov/vote

for information about your specific ballot



Reforestation SEEDLING SALE

They are now accepting tree
seedling orders for 2022!

Order early for the best selection - many species will sell out.

Order deadline is April 12, 2022

Seedling pick up will be Friday April 22 and
Saturday April 23.

<http://www.kalamazooconservation.org/2022-seedling-sale-1/>

2022 Road Projects—

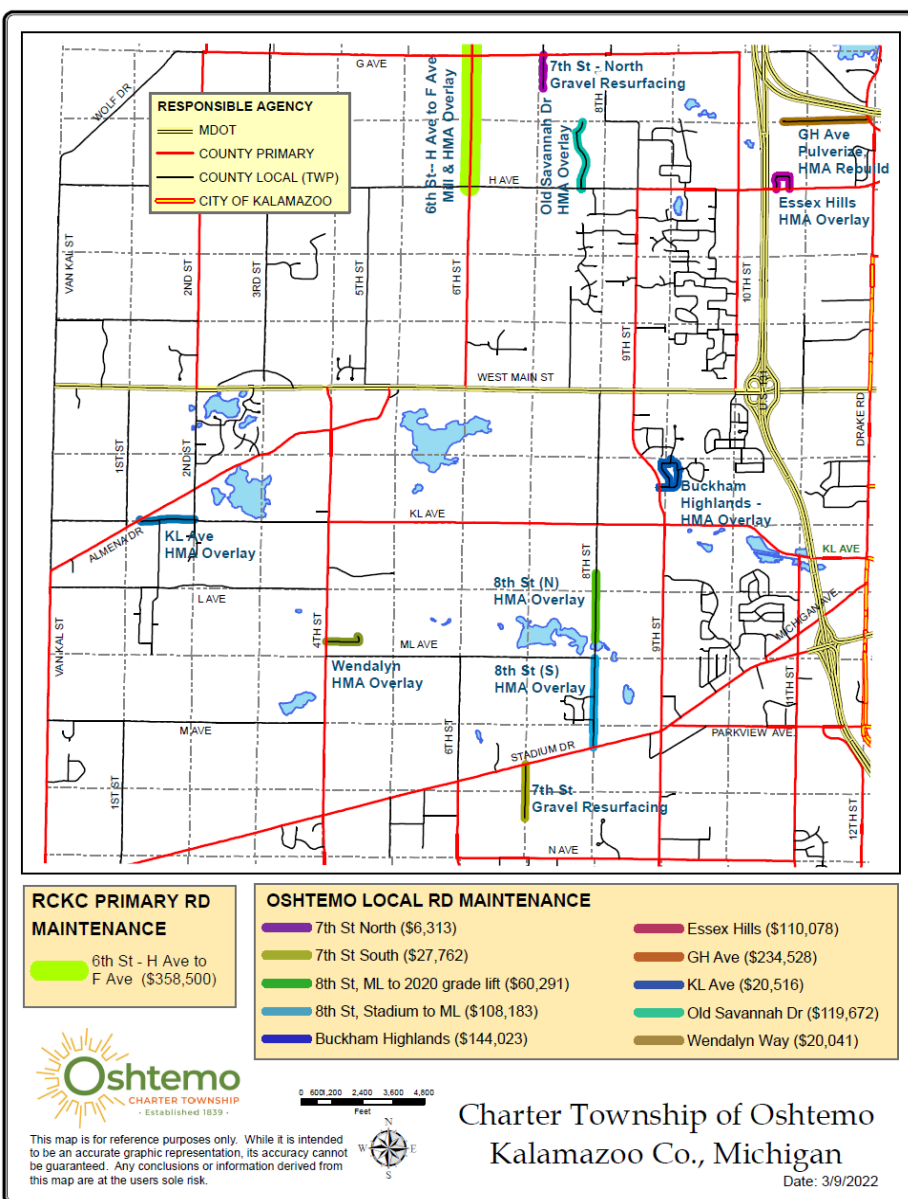
Oshtemo Township and the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) will be partnering again this year to complete annual road preventive maintenance projects to extend the life of roads and keep protecting our assets in the community. Using an asset management program, the proposed projects are presented by the road experts at RCKC and reviewed by the Township's Capital Improvements Committee and Board.

Thanks to the new dedicated road millage funding available this year, the budget is 25% larger for local road preventive maintenance projects, without contributing any general funds as the Township has allocated for road projects in the past. The remaining road funds collected from winter taxes will stay in that dedicated account until determination of sewer projects so it can be utilized for needed road reconstruction projects.

The majority of work this year will include Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) Overlays which includes removing some or all of the existing HMA and replacing it with new layers of HMA. Other routine maintenance may be completed by the RCKC, including high shoulder removal, tree removal and pruning, and ditch cleanout.

Residents should expect some minor delays during these operations, however, access will remain open to the streets and driveways. Follow RCKC on social media or through their RCKC Connect app for schedule updates and information on other projects in the area. Please be alert around construction zones and remain patient to keep yourself and workers safe.

The map below identifies the road segments and associated type of work for this year:



CONNECT TO ROAD COMMISSION OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY ALERTS

Have You Signed Up?

Receive Message Alerts for:

- ◆ Road Construction
- ◆ Road Closures/Detours
- ◆ General Public News

RCKC CONNECT
RCKC ALERTS SIGN UP NOW

Visit : www.kalamazooountyroads.com

Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight issues, included outages or repairs, can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by visiting:

www.consumersenergy.com/outages/street-light

Development in Oshtemo

Curious as to what development has been going on in your community? Look no further! The 2021 Planning Department Annual Report is here!

Every year the Planning Department produces a report that documents their activities. This report includes projects worked on by the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2021 and gives a sneak peek into what is anticipated for 2022. The report provides an overview of what site plans, variances, ordinance amendments, and more have been approved or are ongoing within Oshtemo Township. The full 2021 Planning Department Annual Report can be found on our website: <https://oshtemo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021-Annual-Report.pdf>

Some highlights include:

Hampton Plaza, a new 7,488 square foot multi-tenant, retail sales commercial building with a drive-thru to be constructed on the now vacant 6297 W Main Street.

Speedway, to demolish the existing gas station, dry cleaning, and car wash at 1250 and 1300 S Drake Road to construct a new 4,608 sqft convenience store with a ten dispenser auto fueling canopy.

Biggby, a new 349 square foot BCubed drive-thru within an excess portion of the Meijer parking lot.

Jiffy Lube, a new 3,020 square foot Jiffy Lube vehicle service facility in an excess portion of Meijer's parking lot.

Huntington Run mobile home park, an expansion to construct an additional 31 mobile home units located at 6255 Cranbrook Lane.

We thank our community volunteers on our Boards and Commissions for their time and effort in making Oshtemo what it is today and continually working toward expressing the community's vision for the future. We also would like to thank the members of the public that have and continue to contribute to these discussions. To stay up to date on ongoing activities and find ways that you can contribute to shaping your community, we encourage you to watch for events and meetings on our website and Facebook page.

If you have any questions about a development in Oshtemo or would like more information about Oshtemo Boards and Commissions, please don't hesitate to contact:

Oshtemo Planning Department at 269-216-5223 or ilubbert@oshtemo.org.



KALAMAZOO COUNTY

HOW HAS HOUSING SUPPLY AND COST IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?



www.surveymonkey.com/r/KzooCountyHousing

Please note that none of your personal information will be collected, stored, or reported through this survey. Results from the survey will be published in Spring 2022. We thank you for your time and service!

To help shape the future of housing in our community we are asking for your input! Please take 5 minutes to take this survey, see link and QR code below; the information you provide will provide much needed data on the demand for specific housing types, location preferences, housing challenges, and community housing priorities. Your answers will help local governments, nonprofits, and developers provide housing that meets the needs of our community. Feedback from community members is key!

Fire Department News- Refurbishment of 2008 Pierce Engine

The department's long-range fire apparatus maintenance & replacement plan anticipates that a fire engine will last 20+ years. To accomplish that, we also project a mid-life refurbishment. This year we undertook that task for our 14-year-old 2008 Pierce Velocity identified as Engine 511.



This Engine is assigned to Station 1 and has provided service to Oshtemo covering over 120,000 miles to date. Although its age was showing via component wear and rust, all indications are that its overall structure remain good and thus worthy of the revitalization cost.

A competitive bid was issued to various qualified vendors with it being awarded to Emergency Vehicle Products (EVP) of Kalamazoo. Because of EVP's Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) certifications, and the fact that they continuously provide standard repairs and annual certification testing for Oshtemo, most of Kalamazoo County's fire agencies as well as others in S.W. Michigan, made them the most qualified to undertake this mission.

As the general contractor, they secured the exercise of other local provider for body work (rust removal, priming and painting) and metal fabrication. This work also resulted in the upgrading of electronics such as scene and emergency lighting, and communications systems. The result is an engine that is slated to continue providing uninterrupted service for another 10+ years.



...with Respect, Responsibility, and Pride.



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Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Ph 375.4260 Fax 375.7180
www.oshtemo.org

Contact Us: email oshtemohs@gmail.com Check out our FACEBOOK page!

Stay safe out there! We look forward to hearing from you!
Please contact Mary Anne Britvec for details and questions:
269-760-7059 or maryannebritvec0924@gmail.com.

We would like all of our supporters and interested people to know that OHS is still "in business," albeit with safety limitations. Even though programs and large indoor events are on hold with the spread of Covid variants, we continue our mission and visioning of the restoration of the Drake House. We will begin scheduling private tours of 20 people or less at a time.



Visit our website for more information.
www.oshtemohistoricalociety.org

OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS