



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

Supervisor

Libby Heiny-Cogswell
libbyhc@oshtemo.org

Clerk

Dusty Farmer
dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Treasurer

Grant Taylor
gtaylor@oshtemo.org

Trustees

Cheri Bell
cbell@oshtemo.org

Deb Everett

deverett@oshtemo.org

Zak Ford

zford@oshtemo.org

Ken Hudok

khudok@oshtemo.org

2019 Dump Days

Proof of Residency Required

Township Hall
7275 West Main St.
9 AM– 3 PM

September 28
October 26

November 23—LAST DAY

Leaf Drop Off

November 9 and 23

Shred Day

September 14 10 AM-NOON

New Employees Celebrated by Public Works and Maintenance

Colten Hutson joined Oshtemo as our Public Works Technical Specialist in June. Colten came to Kalamazoo in 2016 from Muskegon, MI, to study Community and Regional Planning at Western Michigan University. After graduation, he chose to move to Oshtemo having recognized it as a progressive community on the rise and looks forward to using his skillset to enhance the Township's infrastructure. Colten enjoys spending time with his family and friends back home in Muskegon, MI, as well as spending time at the beach, disc-golfing, playing tennis, and watching sports. He also loves his dog and volunteering at Habitat for Humanity.



Greg Fountain also joined Oshtemo as our full time Maintenance staff in June. He brings experience in automotive service and diagnostics to the Township, along with a passion for parks maintenance that benefits the entire community. A lifelong resident of Kalamazoo County, Greg and his wife have been

married for 33 years and have two adult children. He and his wife enjoy spending their vacation traveling to South Dakota and New York to visit them. Greg is an avid road cyclist, riding thousands of miles each year on the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and the Kal-Haven Trail.

If you happen to see them around the Township, welcome them to our community!

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

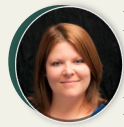
Parks Director Karen High
216-5233 khigh@oshtemo.org (Rentals: 375-4260)

Planning Director
216-5223 oshtemo@oshtemo.org

Public Works Director Marc Elliott
216-5236 melliott@oshtemo.org



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



From Clerk Dusty Farmer—

The Clerk's Office is busy gearing up for the KRESA Millage election this November, but we are also working on other projects in the Township.

Cemeteries have been a big focus over the last year as we work toward creating spaces that are pleasant to visit, provide a service to the community, and don't cost lots of taxpayer dollars to maintain. After approving the Cemeteries Master Plan, the Board made the decision to create a revolving maintenance fund for the Township cemeteries. This is a crucial component of the overall plan to ensure that cemeteries are self-funding.

In addition to the maintenance fund, we are moving forward with the development of natural burial spaces (also known as Green Burials) in our West Oshtemo Cemetery. This involves GIS mapping and pinning the ground for location finding. We also need to coordinate with the County for approval of the expansion of the cemetery. We do not expect this process to be completed this year, but be on the look out for the announcement as to when the Green Burial option will be available to the community.

Additionally, we are committed to cleaning up each cemetery. We have started removal of bushes, shrubs, and trees which are damaging surrounding headstones. Plantings are not allowed in the cemeteries, but this rule was not always followed in the past and we have to make an effort to correct the damage to property. Furthermore, we will be cleaning up the cemeteries twice per year (spring and fall) to remove decorations and other items that hinder the ability of our mowers to properly maintain the area. Overall, the community will see some big improvements to the cemeteries over the coming year!



From Treasurer Grant Taylor—

Special Projects:

Township Investments: Applying new strategies to the investment policy, the Treasurer's office was able to increase investment interest revenues for 2019 by 196%. 2019 investment interest revenue is projected to reach \$150,000. This helps to offset an increase in taxes. (View graph below)

Taxes:

SUMMER TAX BILLS ARE DUE Monday September 16th. A 1% penalty is applied for every month not paid after the deadline. Another 3% penalty is applied if not paid by February 28th, 2020. Post marks are not accepted for tax payments. If you are waiting to pay your tax bill after the office closes on September 15, please use the drop box located in our parking lot.

If you have not received your Summer Tax Bill and do not currently have an escrow or mortgage account, please contact our office immediately. Be aware of mail theft in our Township. If you sent your Tax Bill payment from your home, please call to verify the tax bill was received by our office. If you are paying your tax bill by issuing a check through your online banking, be sure to put in the correct address, as some checks have been returned and not processed. Also, include your parcel number or property address for proper processing.

Please note taxes can be paid in person at the Township Office Monday through Thursday 8:00am – 5:00pm, and Friday 8:00am – 1:00pm. For non-business hours, you can use the DROP BOX IN THE PARKING LOT, WHICH IS CHECKED DAILY.



From Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell—

Fall is here! Supervisor's Office and other work over the summer included:

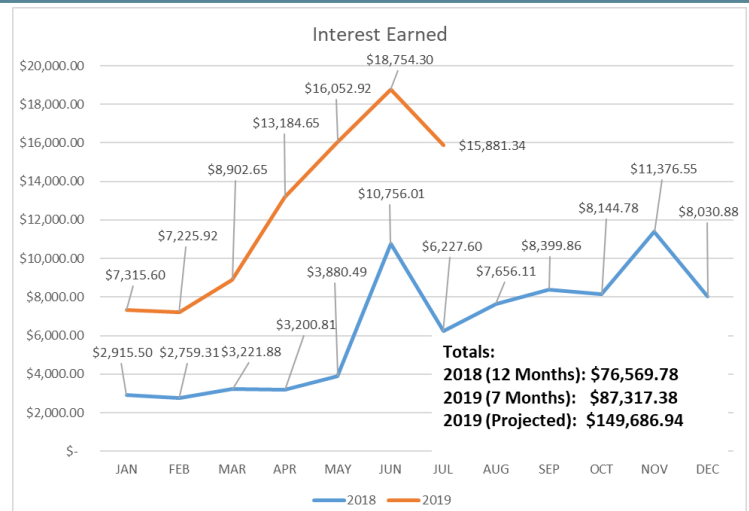
- Primary focus on drafting the 2020 Budget and five-year capital improvement plan. they will be available mid-October for public review prior to November Township Board final decision.
- Fire Department full time members consideration of joining the International Association of Fire Fighters labor organization.
- Continued effort to complete Drake sidewalk to Green Meadow.
- Recruitment for the open planning director position, Supervisor's Office assistant, and IT.
- Successful utilization of advanced assessing field software, greatly expediting annual field work.
- Township-wide fire hydrant inspections continue.

What is upcoming?

- Streetlight conversions to LED lighting in the Stadium Drive corridor.
- Annual Road Commission presentation to and discussion with the Oshtemo Board on Tuesday, October 22nd at 6 pm

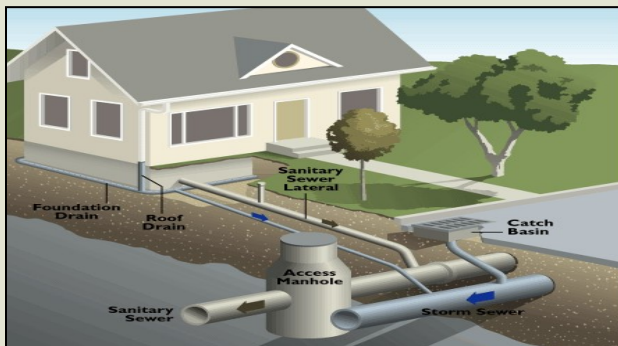
Many neighbors have asked about the sewer expansion. There is much good information available in the FAQs online. But that doesn't give the basic story of why the Township is expanding sewer. For me the expansion discussion began in 2009 when an Oshtemo couple explained they had nowhere else on their property to place a new septic field. In other words, their days were numbered for being able to occupy their home. Absent a long-term plan for sewer expansion into existing neighborhoods, the Township faced extensions happening unpredictably as individual emergency situations arose. The Sanitary Strategic Plan developed over multiple years of evaluating data and through many step-by-step Board decisions. In the end, the Board asked themselves the basic question—'Is the Township in the sewer public utility business or is it not?' After extensive thought the Board decided, "Yes, we are in the sewer business." The decisions followed to expand in a professional and methodical manner. A patch work system of lines and connections was determined to be unsustainable.

Please stop in during the next Supervisor Open Office hours— Monday September 23rd, Noon – 2 pm, or call 216-5220 to set up an appointment.



Mandatory Sewer Hookups

Public Works has begun distributing a Second Notice Letter to unsewered properties in Oshtemo that have access to public sanitary sewer service. Oshtemo has made public sewers a priority in recent years to provide greater protection and management of our shared groundwaters. All of Kalamazoo County relies upon ground water sources for drinking. Notice is being sent to all property owners who currently have access to the public sewer system but have



not yet connected. Out of 319 identified occupied properties in the Township, 55 properties have completed their connection to the public utility in the past year. To assist owners with financing this required property improvement, the Township offers an installment payment plan, up to 20 years, with an interest rate at 6.5%. For the Township's scheduled 2020 extension of public sewer into older neighborhoods, Oshtemo is arranging enhanced financing through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Regardless, for most of the Township, USDA can provide individual low interest loans under its "504 Home Repair Program", for qualifying property owners with a limited income. While the mandatory connection program provides a

two-year compliance window, please note that the Township grants 15-year effective lifespan of a septic tank, prior to the mandatory connection requirement deadline.

For residents needing information on their septic system and its current age, you can visit the Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services website to request septic system permit and request your property as-built septic records via an online request at the KCHCS website

www.kalcounty.com/hcs/.

For the private-side connection work that individual owners will need to complete (i.e. installation of a sewer lateral to the house), the Township recommends getting 2-3 estimates from licensed excavators or sewer/septic firms before contracting this work. Following connection, residents will begin to be billed quarterly by the City of Kalamazoo for sanitary sewer service. Residents may refer to the City's current wastewater rate schedule at <https://www.kalamazoocity.org/>

Residents may contact Colten Hutson by phone: 269-216-5228 or email: chutson@oshtemo.org for more information about the Township's mandatory sewer connection requirements.



The Oshtemo Historical Society's upcoming Open House will highlight recent renovations to the historic Drake House and offer fun activities for adults and kids. Visitors can also preview improvements underway at the new park surrounding the historic home, slated to open later this year. A timber frame event barn, patterned after the carriage barn that once stood on the site, will be nearly complete and open for viewing. Made of locally harvested timbers, the barn includes event space and two accessible restrooms. A new ramp will provide accessible entry into the historic house for the first time. A new parking lot will be open and interpretive signs will be on display. Projects to be completed later in the year include a new picnic shelter and accessible crushed stone walking trail.

**Saturday, October 5th
Noon- 4:00 pm**

**Drake Farmstead Park
927 North Drake Road
Free admission**

**For more information:
www.oshtemo.org/events**

Drake Road Sidewalk Project

The status of the Drake Road sidewalk and pathway project from Green Meadow Drive to West Main Street on Drake Road has been stalled due to utility conflicts within the public right-of-way. A preconstruction meeting was held with the Kalamazoo County Road Commission and Utilities last fall. It was anticipated that all utilities would be relocated in advance of our sidewalk work. Unfortunately, our construction project was well underway before Consumers Energy was able to complete their detailed design plans to relocate the buried electrical power lines. We have also learned that the task was deemed so challenging, that at least two private utility contractors have elected not to do the work. We understand alternative designs are now being explored by Consumers Energy. Due to the delay, our sidewalk contractor has vacated the project site. He will return to complete the last retaining wall and sidewalk once the utilities have been moved and relocated.





Oshtemo Fire Prevention Day 2019

Saturday October 12th 11:00am-3:00pm
3664 South 9th Street at Flesher Field



Come and Join Us!

Please join us to celebrate the 3rd annual Oshtemo Fire Prevention Day. Our aim at Fire Prevention day is to give tips to prevent fires, educate our citizens about fire safety, and build community relationships.

Activities to Enjoy:

- Fire Apparatus and Tool Demonstration
- Fire Escape Plan Smoke Simulator
- Live Fire Burn Cube Demonstration
- Kids Firefighter Obstacle Course
- Face Painting
- Live DJ

In Partnership With: Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department K9 Unit, Life EMS Hands Only CPR, West Michigan AirCare Fly In, Oshtemo Rotary Club, Bag Pipe Band, Motor Mouth Food Truck, Section 1776




"With Respect, Responsibility, and Pride"


Update: Fire Hydrant Flow Testing and Flag Installation

As introduced in the March newsletter, our crews are chipping away at a large summer long project designed to ensure that fire hydrants can be easily found and are prepared to provide the necessary gallonage of water when they are needed. Firefighters have completed testing and installation of the new marker flags on 237 (22.7%) of the 1,080 fire hydrants, and are diligently working to complete all of them as soon as possible.


Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office


The Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office and Oshtemo Township would like to welcome our kids back to school. A couple safety tips we would like everyone to keep in mind are:

 Parents, know where kids are to be picked up after school. Have a regular, safe place for your kids to wait for you to pick them up. If kids are walking to or from school, have a pre-established route agreed upon by the kids and parents that kids take daily.

 Kids: walk with friends whenever possible. This is always safer than walking by yourself.

Please keep in mind that Halloween will soon be approaching and we want everyone to be as safe as possible. Please these safety tips in mind when celebrating the event:

 Costumes should be bright and reflective. Shoes should fit well and costumes should be short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame.

 Costumes, wigs and accessories should be flame resistant. Place an emergency identification and address on the costume and/or on a bracelet.

Thank you everyone and we wish all of our kids a great school year and a safe Halloween!

Paid On-Call Firefighter Recruitment

Each fall, Oshtemo Fire and Rescue places an emphasis on recruiting community members willing to undergo the training and demands of providing services to our neighbors and friends.

If you have an interest and wish to learn more, please see our website: <https://www.oshtemo.org/fire-department/employment/>

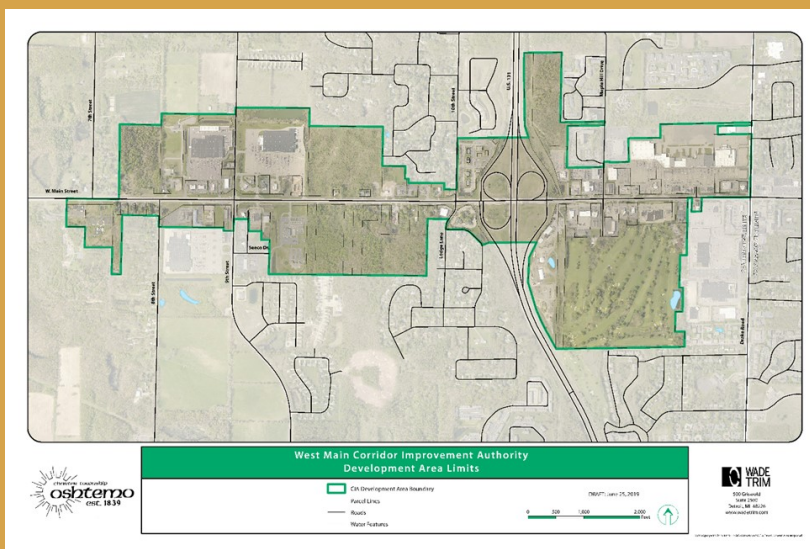
Oshtemo Township Fire Department Hiring Process



Public Hearing for the West Main Corridor Improvement Authority

West Main Street, from Drake Road west to approximately 7th Street, is a premier commercial corridor in Oshtemo Charter Township. It contains many of the major retail, restaurant, and local service establishments in our community. Because of its attractive economic draw, additional businesses are interested in developing within this corridor. While the Township has worked to proactively plan for this new development, revenue to address existing and potential future impacts is not readily available.

To account for this, the Township recently adopted the West Main Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), which is governed by Public Act 57 of 2018. This Act is designed to assist local communities with funding improvements in commercial corridors. The Act allows the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to make capital improvements within an established commercial district. TIF is not an increase in annual taxes. Properties within the District will pay their usual tax payments to the Township. What the Act does permit is the use of the taxes resulting from increased property values to pay for improvements within the established Authority boundaries.



This powerful tool is one of the only options for Townships to make targeted public improvements within an area. Michigan planning laws do not allow the Township to levy impact fees or development exactions, which help to pay for off-site public improvements that benefit the new development. Utilizing TIF funds within the potential Authority area would allow the Township to address specific public improvements that would not likely be funded by other means.

The boundaries of the District are properties along West Main Street from Drake Road west to the Township Hall. Currently, a 60-day public comment period is in effect on the West Main CIA Development and TIF Plan. The draft Plan can be found on the Township's website at <https://www.oshtemo.org/wmcea/>

A public hearing on the Development and TIF Plan is scheduled for October 22nd before the Township Board. All are welcome to provide input on the Plan either by email to jjohnston@oshtemo.com or letter, or at the public hearing on October 22nd.

ELECTION NOTICE

**SPECIAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2019
OSHTEMO TOWNSHIP PRECINCTS 3-10
FOR**

**KALAMAZOO REGIONAL
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY
(KRESA)
AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION PROPOSAL
1 MILL FOR 20 YEARS**

Full text of the ballot proposition may be obtained at the administrative offices of Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency, 1819 East Milham Road, Portage, Michigan 49002-3035, telephone: (269) 250-9202



To register to vote, please contact
Clerk Dusty Farmer
269-216-5224

REMINDER: TIRE DROP OFF

OCTOBER 26, 2019
Texas Township and Oshtemo Township Residents
7110 West Q Ave.
9am-Noon
NO TRACTOR TIRES ACCEPTED

Car/Pickup Tires..... \$3 per tire
Car/Pickup Tires w/wheel..... \$5 per tire
Large Tires (Semi)..... \$10 per tire
Large Tires (Semi) w/wheel..... \$14 per tire w/wheel

Need a safe
place to
exchange
online purchases?



The Township Hall is
safe and secure
and open
M-Thur 8am-5pm and
Fri 8am-1pm

Is Your Streetlight Out?
Streetlight outages can be
reported directly to Consumers
Energy by calling:
800-477-5050

CONNECT TO ROAD COMMISSION
OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY ALERTS



Have You Signed Up?

Receive Message Alerts
for:
♦ Road Construction
♦ Road Closures/Detours
♦ General Public News

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RCKC ALERTS SIGN UP NOW

Visit : www.kalamazoocountyroads.com



OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

When September arrives, our children return to school and continue their education. Fall is a good time for adults to consider getting additional education. With that in mind, we offer two programs that will provide us a chance to learn about the past.

On **September 19th at 7:00 p.m.**, our guest speaker will be **Chris Siriano**, Director of the House of David. He will share the history of this group from Benton Harbor and focus on their baseball team. Please join us for this free program, which will be held at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 W. Main. Street.

On **October 5th between noon to 4:00 p.m.**, there will be an **Open House at the Drake Farmstead**, located at 927 N. Drake Road. This will be another opportunity to see the progress that has been made at the Farmstead and we will have crafts, vendors, music, food, fun and more. Bring the family for a look at life in the 1800's.

Visit our website for more information.

www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org

www.oshtemo.org
Ph 375.4260 Fax 375.7180
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
7275 West Main Street

