



WATERTOWN

CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Volume 34 Issue 3

Fall 2020

12803 S. Wacousta Road
Grand Ledge, MI 48837
(517) 626-6593
Fax (517) 626-6405
www.WatertownTownship.com

Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday
9am - 5pm

Friday (Temporary)
9am - 3pm

**Township Offices
Closed:**

Thursday, November 26
Friday, November 27
Thursday, December 24
Friday, December 25
Thursday, December 31
Friday, January 1
Monday, January 18

NOVEMBER MILLAGE REQUEST

For many years, the budget philosophy of the Watertown Township Board of Trustees has been to pay operating expenses out of current revenues, without reliance on reserve funds set aside for other purposes. In 2020, for the first time in at least 16 years, the board was forced to use reserve funds to pay operating expenses, due to the rise in cost of emergency services after a three-year grant ended.

Despite our best efforts to keep costs down, we know that the cost of fire and ambulance services are going to continue to increase in future years. In order to create a sustainable financial future, and to cover the cost of fire and ambulance service at the same level currently provided, the board has voted to put a millage request on the ballot for November 3, 2020.

This millage will raise monies that can only be used for fire and emergency medical services. This will relieve the burden on the general fund revenue and will allow those monies to be used to fund other township services such as road maintenance, recycling, parks, etc. without disruption.

The millage proposal allows the township to levy up to three mills for fire and emergency medical services. One mill would produce approximately \$315,000. The cost to a homeowner living in a house valued at \$100,000 taxable value would be approximately \$100 per year if one mill is assessed.

Watertown Township is the only community in this area that has no dedicated millages. This millage request provides an opportunity for voters to decide whether fire and emergency medical services are important enough to them to provide a consistent and sustainable source of funding to continue those services.

The language of the millage request allows the township board to determine each year the amount, up to three mills, that is needed for fire and emergency medical services. This approach enables the board to keep the costs to taxpayers at the lowest level needed to provide services and ensures that the funding is specific to only fire and emergency medical services.

MILLAGE REQUEST CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NOVEMBER MILLAGE REQUEST (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The board chose to place this millage request on the ballot for the November 3, 2020, election because it is a presidential election, which usually has the most voters who participate. We want the greatest amount of input from our residents on this issue.

While an increase in taxes is rarely popular, creating a stable and solid source of revenue for fire and emergency medical services is a goal embraced by most of the township residents who responded to our community wide survey in 2019. This November, you will have the opportunity to cast your vote on the issue.

MILLAGE REQUEST INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

There are multiple public meeting opportunities available for residents to seek information on the issue. At this time, we intend to hold the in-person meetings under the pavilion in the Gloria Miller Looking Glass Valley Park. In the event that we are unable to hold those meetings safely, they will become Zoom meetings like the other meetings. Please check the township website for updates and login information for the online meetings. The meeting schedule is:

Monday, September 21, 2020: 12pm (noon) - Gloria Miller Looking Glass Valley Park

Monday, September 21, 2020: 5pm - Gloria Miller Looking Glass Valley Park

Thursday, September 24, 2020: 12pm (noon) by Zoom

Thursday, September 24, 2020: 7pm by Zoom

Tuesday, September 29, 2020: 2pm - Gloria Miller Looking Glass Valley Park

Tuesday, September 29, 2020: 7pm - Gloria Miller Looking Glass Valley Park

Wednesday, September 30, 2020: 12pm (noon) by Zoom

Wednesday September 30, 2020: 7pm by Zoom

MILLAGE BALLOT LANGUAGE

The ballot language for the fire and emergency services millage request that will be on the November ballot is provided below, to allow all residents to have the ability to familiarize themselves with the request.

Shall the Charter Township of Watertown levy a millage on all property of up to 3 mills (\$3.00 per \$1,000 of taxable value) in accordance with the charter township tax levy limitation imposed under MCL 42.27 and levy it for up to 10 years, 2021 through 2030 inclusive, for the purpose of providing funding for the operation and maintenance of fire and emergency medical services, including apparatus and equipment, thereby raising an estimated amount of \$315,000 per levied mill in the first year?

Yes

No

GENERAL ELECTION - NOVEMBER 3, 2020

DEB ADAMS, TOWNSHIP CLERK | CHRISTY SOCHAY, DEPUTY CLERK

The general election will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. We expect record numbers of voters to cast their votes either by mail or in person at the polls.

Many, many voters have requested an absent voter ballot for this election, so that they can vote at home. Absent voter ballots are available to any voter who wishes to use that option. We have almost 2,000 applications in our office right now from voters who have asked to have their ballot mailed to them.

We encourage voting by mail in this election. It provides the least risk of virus transmission to the voter and the election inspectors at the polls. It is convenient and allows the voter to make choices without any rush or waiting in line.

We expect to begin mailing ballots to voters at the end of September. Those ballots can be returned to us at any time. They must be received in our office by 8pm on Election Day, November 3, 2020, in order to be counted. All ballots returned to our office before Election Day are kept secured, and they are opened by election inspectors and tabulated on Election Day.

I have been informed that there are various groups which are sending out applications for absent voter ballots. It is possible that you will receive more than one application. You only need to return one application to our office in order to receive a ballot.

If you decide to email your application for an absentee ballot to our office, please attach it to your email as a jpeg or pdf attachment to dadams@watertowntownship.com. Make sure that the image of the application is not included in the body of the email, that it is vertically oriented, and that it is clear enough to read the signature so that we can verify it with the voter records.

If you choose to vote by absentee ballot, you can return your ballot by putting it in the mail, or by dropping it off at the township office at 12803 S. Wacousta Road. We have a secure drop box that is available 24/7 located beside the door facing Wacousta Road. Do not place your ballot in the drop box of a different jurisdiction—it must be returned to Watertown Charter Township (not the county office).

If you mail your ballot back to us, please mail it in plenty of time so that it can arrive at our office by Election Day. Return postage on ballots will be paid by the State of Michigan for this election only. Your return envelope will have the postage on it, and it will be ready to go when you complete your ballot. Be sure to sign your ballot envelope.

You can check the Michigan Voter Information Center at www.michigan.gov/vote to confirm your voter registration, apply for an absent voter ballot, and to confirm the date that your ballot has been mailed and received back at our office.

Voters can vote in person on Election Day from 7am - 8pm. We will have the polling place set up approximately the same as it was in August. We do expect that there will be delays as we can accommodate only a few voters in the polling place at a time, in order to practice social distancing.

Even if you do not customarily wear a mask in public, we ask that you do so on Election Day for the length of time it takes you to vote in person. Our election inspectors will be in contact with a large number of people that day, and it is our sincere goal to maintain their health and the health of all of our voters.

TOWNSHIP TREASURER INFORMATION

JANICE THELEN, TOWNSHIP TREASURER | MELANIE WRIGHT, DEPUTY TREASURER | LISA WINANS, ASSISTANT

So here we are, wrapping up the most unusual summer that most of us have ever experienced. For me, I am also wrapping up 22 years of being the Treasurer of Watertown Charter Township. When I stepped into the office on August 10, 1998, I never dreamed that I would ever be in a position to retire from the office of treasurer. It has been a sometimes wild and always exciting 22 years. I would like to go on record to say that YOU have been the best part of my job. I have enjoyed visiting with you, learning about your family, your employment, your retirement plans, the best place to vacation, your hopes, your dreams, what has brought you joy, and what has brought you sadness. Thank you for sharing your life with me and for allowing me to share my life with you. You are what makes Watertown Charter Township such a wonderful place to live, to play, and for me, to work. While I am excited to start the next chapter of my life, know that when I leave office on November 20th at noon, there will be a heaviness in my heart as I say good-bye to all of you. Thank you for an amazing 22 years. - Janice

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Summer property taxes due – September 14, 2020, by close of township business to avoid a 1% per month interest charge on the balance due. **Partial payments accepted.**
- Deferment of summer property taxes, if applicable, due by close of township business, September 14, 2020.
- Third quarter utility bills due September 30, 2020, by close of township business.
- Township offices closed November 26-27, 2020 for Thanksgiving break.
- Winter property taxes should be delivered by December 4, 2020. If you have not received your winter property tax statement(s) by this date, please contact the treasurer's office.
- Fourth quarter utility bills due December 30, 2020, by close of township business.
- Winter property taxes due – February 16, 2021, by close of township business.

REMINDERS:

When making payment by check, the township accepts the written numerical portion as legal tender. Before sending in your payment, verify that the written numerical portion is correctly written.

Partial tax and sewer payments are accepted. Remember that applicable late fees and interest will be applied on the balance due after the due date.

Unless requested, property tax receipts are no longer automatically mailed. Payments are recorded in real time and may be viewed on the township website. Receipts may be printed from the township website, www.watertowntownship.com; under "Quick Links" click on "Tax Receipts" and follow the prompts.

Additional payment information, office hours, office closure dates, etc., are located on the back of the tax bill.

Occasionally, the township will close the office due to inclement weather. If in doubt, call or check the township website before driving to the office.

Due to COVID-19, staff is alternating days in the office. It is our goal that each department will be staffed during normal business hours; however, if you wish to meet with a specific person, please call or email to confirm their availability.

COMMUNITY EVENTS UPDATES

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we must confirm that the following events will not take place in 2020:

- Dine with Santa
- Dump Your Junk Day will not be rescheduled from spring

We will continue to keep residents informed of event happenings through the township website and newsletters.

RECYCLING IS OPEN! STAY VIGILANT!

JOHN MAAHS, TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR | JENNIFER TUBBS, TOWNSHIP MANAGER | DONNA CASE, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The recycling center has been doing great, but we are just starting to have some issues. We have installed a lot of signage in the hopes of keeping the recycling center clean, safe, and open. Please stay vigilant, and if you see recycling that you know does not follow the rules let us know so we can add that to our education campaign. The bins are being emptied daily, Monday through Friday. It is strongly recommended to avoid recycling on the weekends as much as possible. For your safety, and the safety of the Watertown Township staff and Granger employees who maintain the site, everything must be placed in a bin. With your help, we can avoid overfilled bins forcing the site to close. Happy recycling!

Help us keep our recycling center from looking like this.



TOWNSHIP CONTACTS (517) 626-6593

Please listen to the prompts to select an extension.

www.WatertownTownship.com

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

John Maahs - Cell (517) 242-6336
johnny@tir.com

TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

Chad Cooley - Work (517) 819-4980
lookingglasscyclery@gmail.com
Todd Hufnagel - Work (517) 626-2200
hufnagelauto@gmail.com
Holly Madill - madilltwp@gmail.com
Ronald Overton - Home (517) 626-6447
overtonron@wowway.com

TOWNSHIP MANAGER EXT *207

Jennifer Tubbs, Township Manager
jtubbs@watertowntownship.com
Donna Case, Administrative Assistant
dcase@watertowntownship.com

Questions concerning special assessments, sewers, roads, non-zoning ordinance enforcement, sewer and water permits, park/pavilion rental

OFFICE OF THE TREASURER EXT *206

Janice Thelen, Township Treasurer
jthelen@watertowntownship.com
Melanie Wright, Deputy Treasurer
mwright@watertowntownship.com
Lisa Winans, Assistant
lwinans@watertowntownship.com

Questions concerning tax bills, special assessments

LOOKING GLASS REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

(517) 627-9831
Fax (517) 627-9846

Questions concerning fire coverage districts, burn permits

OFFICE OF THE CLERK EXT *201

Deb Adams, Township Clerk
dadams@watertowntownship.com
Christy Sochay, Deputy Clerk
csochay@watertowntownship.com

Susan Hunter, Bookkeeper

Questions concerning the cemetery, Freedom of Information Act, elections, meeting dates, voter registration, township records, accounts payable

CEMETERY

Weekdays (517) 626-6593 or (517) 626-6066
Andy Case, Maintenance Supervisor/Sexton (517) 490-1383

PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE EXT *205

Andrea Polverento, Planning Director
apolverento@watertowntownship.com
Melanie Wright, Planning and Zoning Assistant
mwright@watertowntownship.com
Lisa Winans, Assistant
lwinans@watertowntownship.com

Questions concerning building/zoning/trade permits, zoning requirements, zoning & subdivision ordinances, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission

ASSESSOR EXT *210

Jeff Mackenzie, Assessor
jmackenzie@watertowntownship.com
Jill Schliep, Assistant

Office hours: Varied due to COVID-19. Please call for availability.

Questions concerning assessing, SEV's, property listings, property splits

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Jeff Cranson, Building Inspector
Phone (517) 622-8822 Fax (517) 622-8833