



# WATERTOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Volume 34 Issue 2

Summer 2020

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Office Hours:  
Monday - Thursday  
9am - 5pm

Friday (Temporary)  
9am - 3pm

Township Offices  
Closed:  
Friday, July 3  
Monday, September 7

How Does LGRFA  
Service Stack Up?  
Page 2

Recycling is Open!  
Page 7

## HERE AND READY TO SERVE YOU!

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

The township offices look a little different, but we are here and ready to serve you! For the safety of residents and staff, the township has installed a new walk-up window for service in the entrance. Residents will enter from the north entrance (under the walkway), with clearly marked social distanced one-way traffic through the hall to the new walk-up window. If you need a meeting with staff, no problem; we have created a meeting room through the south room door to accommodate a safe meeting space. A secure drop box is available to return payments, election material, or other items 24-hours a day.

Offices are open our regular hours of 9am - 5pm Monday through Thursday, but will close at 3pm each Friday for sanitization of public spaces. We appreciate your patience as we all adjust to the temporary new requirements for service, and we look forward to seeing you.



# FIRE AND EMS SERVICE...HOW DOES LGRFA STACK UP?

HOLLY MADILL, TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

The township’s last newsletter provided the history of the Looking Glass Regional Fire Authority (LGRFA), described how fire and emergency services are provided through a contract with Delta Township, and detailed current and future funding and staffing needs.

The majority of fire department calls are actually not for fires but are for ambulance service. Of the 522 dispatches in 2019, LGRFA answered 190 calls for fire service (36%) and 332 calls for ambulance service (64%).

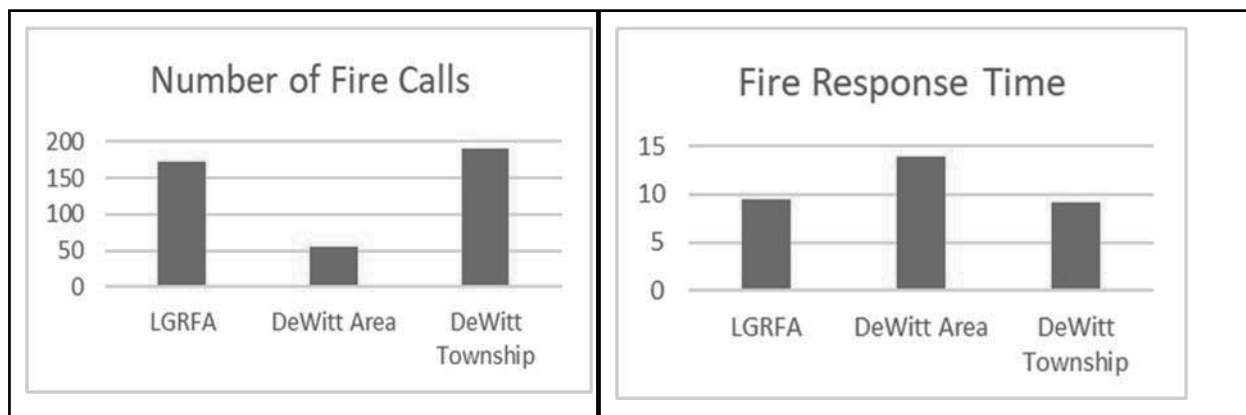
Below are comparisons of total response time averages among area fire and emergency medical services (EMS). A few notes as you compare:

- It is important to compare service area sizes. For example, the LGRFA service area is twice the size of Dewitt Township’s service area and more comparable with the Dewitt Area Emergency Services Authority (DAESA).
- Notice that the smaller the service area, the faster the response time.
- LGRFA participates with all surrounding fire response agencies with automatic mutual aid. Automatic mutual aid is when assistance is dispatched automatically, regardless of jurisdiction.

Residents in the northeast corner of the township often wonder why we don’t use the Dewitt Area Emergency Services Authority (DAESA) for response, as this is physically closer to this area and assumed to be a faster response. After comparing data, even though they are physically closer, the response time is longer for both fire and EMS services.

	Service Area (Square Miles)	Fire					EMS			
		No. of Calls	Dispatch Delay	Travel Time	Response Time		No. of Calls	Dispatch Delay	Travel Time	Response Time
LGRFA	72	172	0.50	9.01	9.51	LGRFA	332	0.60	8.93	9.53
DeWitt Area	77	56	1.95	12.05	14.00	DeWitt Area	309	0.65	9.27	9.92
DeWitt Township	36	190	1.47	7.64	9.11	DeWitt Township	1268	0.67	7.83	8.50
Mercy Ambulance						Mercy Ambulance	2538	2.15	10.73	12.88

Data is provided by Clinton and Eaton County Central Dispatches for 2019.



“How Does LGRFA Stack Up?” Continued on Page 5

## PRIMARY ELECTION - AUGUST 4, 2020

DEB ADAMS, TOWNSHIP CLERK | CHRISTY SOCHAY, DEPUTY CLERK

On August 4, 2020, we will conduct a primary election. At this election voters will have the opportunity to vote on contested seats for one party only. In any primary election, voters may cast votes for either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party, but not both. Only in general elections can voters split their votes among parties.

Voters will have the opportunity to vote in person or by mail. Due to the pandemic and the risk of the spread of COVID-19, we encourage all voters to consider voting by mail, as that option provides the least safety risk, both for voters and for the election inspectors who work the elections. Any voter who wishes to vote in person will have that option, although the polling place will look different, as we will be setting things up to maintain social distancing. We will be limiting the number of voting booths to allow for physical separation and they will be sanitized after each use, so wait times may be longer. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for voters and staff, and to run the election as efficiently as possible.

We have mailed absent voter applications to all people on the permanent absent voter list. The State of Michigan is mailing absent voter applications to all other registered voters. We also anticipate political parties or other political action groups will send absent voter applications to registered voters. We only need to receive one absent voter application from you to send you your ballot by mail. Feel free to throw away any duplicates that you receive. If you receive an application for a voter who is deceased or no longer lives at that address, please write "Deceased" or "No Longer at Address" on the envelope and return the envelope to our office or email us a photo of the envelope. This will enable us to work through the issue.

When you return your application to us, you may mail it to our office, or drop it off in our drop box that is available 24-hours a day. You may also send an electronic copy by scanning the application or taking a photograph of it. *If you choose the photograph option*, please send it as an attachment to your email, as otherwise we are unable to print the application for our records. A pdf or jpg attachment works best for us. Please put something in the message line of your email so that it does not go into our spam folder. Make sure the signature shows clearly.

If you would like to track your absent voter application or ballot, you can go to [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote) to see if your application or ballot has been sent or received.

It has been challenging to adapt to the circumstances that the pandemic has created. We are trying hard to provide excellent service to our voters and conduct the election with safety and security in mind. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work through this difficult period.

## STAY IN THE KNOW

Throughout the Governor's recent "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive orders, the township website was updated as changes to township services occurred. We will continue to maintain this page to keep residents informed while COVID-19 remains an issue. You can find the "Township COVID-19 Updates" link to that information at [www.watertowntownship.com](http://www.watertowntownship.com), under "Featured Items." We hope you find this 24/7 resource helpful.



## TOWNSHIP TREASURER INFORMATION

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

These past three months have certainly been a challenge as we faced a pandemic, Stay Home-Stay Safe orders, work from home challenges, and more. The township offices are opening with changes, such as a newly installed walk-up window for assistance located inside the entrance hallway. Please see the front page article for additional information regarding re-opening the township offices. Thank you for your patience as we safely re-open the office.

Your 2020 summer property taxes will be mailed by the end of June and should be arriving to your home early July. If you haven't received your property tax statement by July 9, please contact the treasurer's office and request that a tax statement be mailed or emailed to you. When requesting a copy, be sure to include your mailing address as this will allow us to determine if our records are correct.

Upon receiving your property tax statement, please verify that your Principal Resident Exemption (PRE) is correct. The PRE exempts most residential property from paying the school operating millage on the winter tax statement. For most homeowners, the PRE will be 100%. If your PRE is less than 100% and you believe that your home should receive either a full or partial exemption, please contact either the treasurer or assessing department as soon as possible for a review of your PRE.

Your 2020 summer property taxes are due Monday, September 14, 2020, by 5pm to avoid interest fees. Please remember that postmarks are not accepted when determining timely payment.

Payments may be made by check (accepted as a conditional payment), bank draft, ACH withdraw (authorization form included with your tax statement), credit/debit/electronic check, and cash. To make a payment in person, please refer to the front page article for the procedure for visiting the office. Payments made by credit/debit/electronic check will be assessed a variable transaction fee by the processing company, Point&Pay.

Please remember that since 2018, tax receipts are no longer mailed. The township provides real time payment updates on our website, which allows you to see when the township received your payment and to print a receipt if needed. To print a receipt from the township website home page at [www.watertowntownship.com](http://www.watertowntownship.com), under "Quick Links," find the "Tax Receipts" link and follow the directions provided. You will be able to search by name, address, or parcel number. If you wish to have your tax receipt mailed at the time of payment, please include this information with your payment.

Summer deferment applications will be provided with your tax statement. If you qualify for a deferment of summer property taxes, please complete the application/affidavit and return it to the treasurer's office by close of business on Monday, September 14, 2020. A summer deferment does not waive the tax liability, it only defers the summer tax due date until the winter property tax due date.

When you receive your property tax statement, please note that the back of the statement will have additional payment information, such as the acceptance of partial tax payments.

Due to the office closure in response to the pandemic, utility bills with a due date of March 31, 2020, were not assessed a late payment fee if payment arrived after the due date. For those who paid the late payment fee, you should see that your quarterly bill has been reduced by this amount. Second quarter utility bills have been mailed. If you do not have a private septic system, you should receive a utility bill. If you did not receive one, please contact the treasurer's department as soon as possible.

# GARAGE SALE REGULATIONS

ANDREA POLVERENTO, PLANNING DIRECTOR | MELANIE WRIGHT, PLANNING AND ZONING ASSISTANT  
LISA WINANS, ASSISTANT

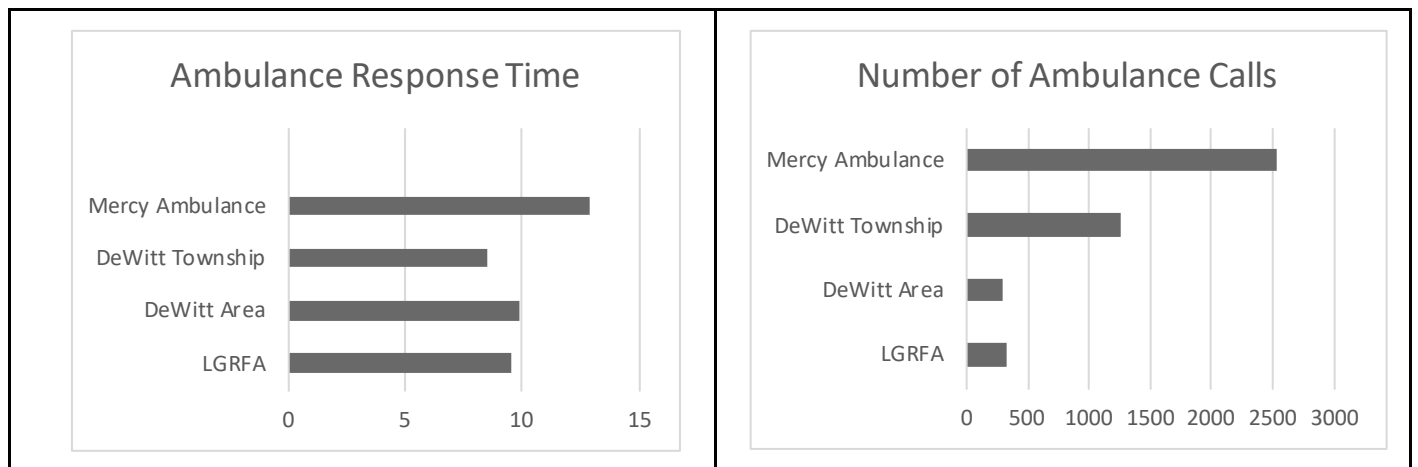
With garage sale season right around the corner, we want to take this opportunity to remind residents of the following regulations:

- Garage sales and yard sales are permitted in all zoning districts.
- Garage sale signs are permitted, but we ask that they be removed as soon as possible when the sale is over.
- Garage sales and yard sales are permitted **ONLY** for 12 days during any one, six-month period.
- This 12-day restriction applies to all items left out for sale in a front or side yard.

If you have any questions about these regulations, please don't hesitate to contact the Planning & Zoning Department.

## HOW DOES LGRFA STACK UP? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Of the four EMS service providers, LGRFA has the best response time for agencies with a comparable service area, are staffed by paramedics, operate an advanced life support service, and transport patients directly to the hospital. DAESA and Dewitt Township provide medical first response only and transport is provided by Mercy Ambulance. Mercy Ambulance covers the service area of both DAESA and Dewitt Township.



When comparing services, it is important to keep in mind the difference between first responders and EMS providers. First responders provide basic life support services until an ambulance can respond. Paramedics are licensed to provide more complex advanced life support emergency medical services than first responders, including transport.

LGRFA's response times are better than agencies with the same or larger service area and very comparable to response times of surrounding agencies that are half of the LGRFA service coverage area.

From this article you can see how difficult it is to compare fire and ambulance services with neighboring agencies, because they all face different challenges and operate differently. One common challenge all departments face is the statewide firefighter shortage, and it is predicted to get worse over the next decade. One common benefit they share is that with automatic mutual aid, LGRFA and area agencies benefit by having such fine neighboring agencies all working toward the same goal of quality fire and ambulance service.

# PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

ANDREA POLVERENTO, PLANNING DIRECTOR | MELANIE WRIGHT, PLANNING AND ZONING ASSISTANT  
LISA WINANS, ASSISTANT

We receive questions from time to time from residents asking why they didn't receive any information or notification about a development project which is proposed or underway nearby. This article is meant to explain what projects require public notification and who will receive those notices.

First, it is important to understand that there are two types of uses: those that are allowed "by right" or are considered "principal permitted uses," and those that require a "special land use permit." Additionally, all rezoning requests and requests for variances require public notification.

Uses that are allowed by right rarely, if ever, require public notification. These are uses you would typically expect in your zoning district. If you live in an agricultural or residential zone, this could include a new house, a pole barn, or a farm building. In commercial zones, these are low impact business and office uses, like retail, and restaurants and banks without drive-thru facilities. In industrial zones, light industrial plants, warehouses, and office buildings are just a few examples of uses allowed by right.

Uses which are considered "special land uses" are those that are more intensive than the typical uses allowed by right. In agricultural and residential zones, some examples could include larger-scale subdivisions, site condominiums, farm equipment sales, cell towers, and churches. In commercial and industrial zones, this would include anything with a drive-thru, gas stations, car washes, body shops, and similar uses.

State law requires the township to provide for a public hearing for all special land uses, rezoning and variance requests, and a few other infrequent items. We publish a notice in the local newspaper for all public hearings at least 15 days in advance. Typically, you would see these in the DeWitt-Bath Review or the Grand Ledge Independent, depending on which newspaper is published near where the project is proposed. We also post a notice outside at the township hall and on the township's website. You'll also see the items noted on Planning Commission agendas. You might see an item called "site plan review" on a Planning Commission agenda, but no public notice. This is because some projects which exceed 5,000 square feet of new construction for some "by right" uses require the Planning Commission to review the project, but public hearings are not required by law.

If you own property or live within a 300-foot radius of the proposed project, you will receive a public hearing notice in the mail to your address. You will receive this notice at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing. The notification will describe the property which is proposed for development, the type of development proposed, and the time and place of the public hearing. If it's a rezoning or a variance request, the details of those requests will be described.

Please note that notices are not mailed, for any reason, to any person or property that is outside of the 300-foot radius. This may mean that your next-door neighbor receives a notice, but you do not.

If you receive a public hearing notice, you are encouraged to call the office with any questions. We can provide additional details, and explain your various public input options.

## REMINDER: CALL MISS DIG 811!

Utilities are all around us. They provide the electricity, gas, internet, telephone, water, sanitary, and storm sewer services that make our lives much more comfortable. They are also often unseen, underground, and out of mind.

MISS DIG 811 is Michigan's statewide notification system to provide homeowners and others the ability to make a single call to receive a service which flags underground utilities prior to excavation. Their primary function is to process requests from individuals planning to dig, and notify all affected utilities about these excavations. The affected utilities then mark the dig site, flagging the approximate locations of their underground facilities. **MISS DIG 811 is a free service.**

State law requires anyone who is planning any type of excavation, digging, or boring, as well as grading and demolition activities to provide advance notice of at least three business days to MISS DIG by calling 811, 800-482-7171, or by using their online services at [www.missdig.org](http://www.missdig.org).

As a homeowner, it is your responsibility to contact MISS DIG 811 prior to any of the above-mentioned construction activities, if you are doing the work yourself. If you've hired a contractor for the work, check with them to make sure they've called. You must call at least three business days prior to your anticipated start time.

Many construction activities you may not have considered, especially those projects you are more likely to do yourself, such as building a fence, putting up a small shed, planting a tree, or installing a swing set can be affected by underground utilities. If you're unsure, it's always best make the call to MISS DIG 811 to avoid any accidental damage to underground utilities.

## RECYCLING IS OPEN!

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

The bins are back, but we need your help in policing the site. We have installed a lot of signage in the hopes of keeping the recycling center clean, safe and open. Please help by encouraging social distancing when using the site, and most importantly, not leaving anything outside the bin. The bins are 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!





## TOWNSHIP CONTACTS (517) 626-6593

*Please listen to the prompts to select an extension.*

[www.WatertownTownship.com](http://www.WatertownTownship.com)

### TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

John Maahs - Cell (517) 242-6336  
[johnny@tir.com](mailto:johnny@tir.com)

### TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

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

### TOWNSHIP MANAGER

#### EXT \*207

Jennifer Tubbs, Township Manager  
[jtubbs@watertowntownship.com](mailto:jtubbs@watertowntownship.com)  
Donna Case, Administrative Assistant  
[dcase@watertowntownship.com](mailto: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](mailto:jthelen@watertowntownship.com)  
Melanie Wright, Deputy Treasurer  
[mwright@watertowntownship.com](mailto:mwright@watertowntownship.com)  
Lisa Winans, Treasurer's Assistant  
[lwinans@watertowntownship.com](mailto: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](mailto:dadams@watertowntownship.com)  
Christy Sochay, Deputy Clerk  
[csochay@watertowntownship.com](mailto: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](mailto:apolverento@watertowntownship.com)  
Melanie Wright, Planning and Zoning Assistant  
[mwright@watertowntownship.com](mailto:mwright@watertowntownship.com)  
Lisa Winans, Planning and Zoning Assistant  
[lwinans@watertowntownship.com](mailto: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](mailto: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