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 Clerk Sue Buitenhuis
 Trustee Laurie Larsen
 Trustee Howard Behm
 Trustee Mike Hutchins
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DATES TO REMEMBER

December 1st
 Winter taxes are due and payable.

February 14th
 Last day to pay 2012 winter property taxes without a late penalty of 3%.

February 28th
 Last day for local treasurers to collect 2012 property taxes.

March 11th
 First day of Board of Review to hear appeals for the 2013 assessment roll.

June 1st
 Deadline for filing Principal Residence Exemption Affidavits with local assessor.

the amount of snow deposited in your drive and against the mailbox post during winter maintenance operations.

- Did you know:
- Flying snow makes it look like the snow plow trucks are traveling much faster than they are, but the speed of travel ranges from 15-35 mph. Even at these speeds, the force of the snow being pushed off the road can damage mailboxes and other roadside items.
 - The mailbox damage policy for the Road Commission allows the property owner to receive a new standard mailbox from one of their facilities.

Please contact the Road Commission office at Lakeshore Drive and Rosy Mound or visit the OCRC website at www.ottawacorc.com for details.

QUINT ORDERED

This past summer, 66% of the voters approved a one-year Fire Equipment millage to help fund the cost of purchasing a so-called Quint-type fire truck.

This past September, the Township Board approved the purchase of a Quint-type fire truck from Seagrave Fire Apparatus at a cost of about \$767,000.

This price is about \$42,000 above the original cost estimate. *(The Fire Equipment millage will fund about 46% of the total cost with the remaining 54% being funded by the Township's General Fund.)*

Seagrave is acknowledged by most fire professionals to produce a superior fire apparatus. In twenty or twenty-five years, GHT believes that the superior quality of this truck will exceed the incremental price difference of the "second best" bid received (*i.e.*, \$748,430).

The new Quint should be delivered prior to August.



Fiscal Year 2013 Budget

Grand Haven Charter Township's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year — January 1st through December 31st.

For 2013, GHT will spend about \$8.7 million. A breakdown of this budget includes the following:

- ☑ Water and Sewer = 31.0%
- ☑ Public Safety (*Police & Fire*) = 25.5%
- ☑ Street & Transportation = 10.4%
- ☑ Parks and Recreation = 4.7%
- ☑ Administration & Legal = 4.7%
- ☑ Debt Costs = 4.6%
- ☑ Building, Grounds & Cemetery = 4.1%
- ☑ Assessing and Finance = 4.1%
- ☑ Code Enforcement = 2.9%
- ☑ Information Technology = 2.0%
- ☑ Street Lighting = 1.4%
- ☑ Board and Commissions = 1.2%

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The remaining 3.4% is spread among various other costs, such as economic development, elections, insurances, printing and publishing, etc.

The budget is an important tool for the Board to plan, monitor, and control the finances of the Township and special projects. The budget estimates the income and

expenditures for the year and establishes clear spending priorities.

GHT came through the so-called "great recession" in a strong financial position, maintaining an "AA stable" credit rating from Standard and Poors, decreasing its debt, and preserving healthy fund balances or cash reserves in most of the ten funds.

The one exception is the Fire/Rescue Fund. Because this fund depends almost solely upon property taxes, and because property assessments dropped by about 11% over the past three years, the Fire/Rescue Department was forced to rely on its fund balance, or "savings", which have been depleted.

GHT came through the so-called "great recession" in a strong financial position, maintaining its "AA Stable" credit rating from Standard and Poors.

As a result, the General Fund is "subsidizing" the Fire/Rescue Department to ensure that its essential operations continue. The budget contains no new debt. Rather, as a whole, the budget shows revenues exceeding expenditures by about \$123,170.

If you have any specific questions regarding the upcoming 2013 budget or the Township's finances, please contact Denise Chalifoux (*the Township's Accounting and Assessing Director*) by either emailing dchalifoux@gh.t.org or calling the Township's main telephone line — 842-5988.

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NEWSLETTER

SEWER RATE INCREASE

For those residents that are connected to the municipal sewer system, it is noted that your rates will be increasing in June of 2013 by 35 cents per 1,000 gallons.

About 17 cents of this increase is related to renovations occurring at the sewage treatment plant located within the City of Grand Haven.

Specifically, the Sewer Authority will complete two capital projects. The first project replaces the final chemical treatments of the sewage treatment process prior to discharge into the Grand River (*i.e., using chlorine to kill any bacteria and sulfur dioxide to remove the chlorine*) with an ultraviolet light disinfection process to remove any bacteria.

The UV project is considered a public safety issue because of the danger created by the storage of chlorine gas and sulfur dioxide gas at the treatment plant (*i.e., a gas leak could be deadly for residents or people in the area*).

The second project is directed at odor control. This project is slightly more complicated or unusual in that the project is not directed at improving the plant's operations. Rather, the project is directed at a "nuisance".

Within Michigan, wastewater treatment plants have some level of legal liability for preventing nuisance odors. By reducing the amount of odor at the sewage treatment plant, this project is expected to reduce the plant's legal exposure for any odor nuisance complaints.

CHANGES TO DUNE ACT

Grand Haven Charter Township boasts of about seven miles of spectacular coastlines, which includes sand dunes that are famous for breathtaking vistas. These dunes are a geologic gift that are the result of a complex series of processes that occurred over many thousands of years.

Yet these dunes are also fragile and unique environmental systems that can be significantly altered by development or construction. As a result, the State of Michigan initiated a series of regulatory reforms in

1989 that significantly restricted the type of construction and activities that could occur within these dune areas.

Unfortunately, many of the property owners could not use their properties located within these dune areas because of the state's environmental concerns. In order to try to find a better balance between protection of the dunes and residents' property rights, the Legislature



passed Public Act 297 of 2012. The new law's purpose is to both protect dunes for future generations while allowing the enjoyment of the dunes in a manner that is compatible with private property rights.

Although the rules and guidelines that will implement the changes in PA 297 have not yet been drafted, some of the expected changes include:

- Lots recorded prior to July 5, 1989 can now build on the first lakeward-facing slope if the owner does not have a sufficient buildable area landward of the crest. This change is expected to open a number of cottage lots in the Township that were created in the 1930's or prior.
- Maintaining, repairing, or replacing existing utility lines, pipelines, or other critical infrastructure will no longer need a permit, provided the work is done in compliance of the new construction regulations.
- Residents have a right to build a driveway to any dwelling, subject to certain construction regulations.
- Temporary construction access, even if the access involves the removal of vegetation or a contour change, is now allowed provided the area can be restabilized immediately following construction.

There are a number of other changes to the Critical Dune Act too numerous to list. However, you can contact the local MDEQ representative (*Matt Occhipinta*) at (517) 356-0207 with questions.

FIREWORKS

The State of Michigan approved Public Act 256 of 2011 that expanded the types of consumer fireworks that are legal for use.

The new law specifically permits the sale and use of "Class C" consumer fireworks such as roman candles, bottle rockets, firecrackers, aerial spinners, reloadable shell devices, missile-type devices, single tube devices with report, and other items that leave the ground.

These types of fireworks can be used by residents at any time, except that consumer fireworks cannot be used by persons under 18 years of age, by anyone who is intoxicated or impaired, and may not be used on public, school or private property unless express permission is obtained to use the fireworks on that property.

The State of Michigan did allow local governments to prohibit, by ordinance, the ignition and discharge of consumer fireworks. However, such an ordinance cannot prohibit the use of consumer fireworks on the day before, the day of, or the day after a national holiday, which includes:

- New Year's Day (January 1st)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (3rd Monday in January)
- Washington's Birthday (3rd Monday in February)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day (1st Monday of September)
- Columbus Day (2nd Monday in October)
- Veterans Day (November 11th)
- Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday in November)
- Christmas Day (December 25th)



ANGEL TREE

Grand Haven Charter Township staff will be hosting a Salvation Army Angel Tree in the Township's lobby over this holiday season, beginning on Wednesday, November 12th through Monday, December 17th.

The Angel Tree program is designed to collect toys and gifts for low income families for Christmas distribution through the Salvation Army.

If you would like to participate, simply stop into the Township offices during normal working hours to select a tag from the tree and return the purchased item by Monday, December 17th with the selected tag attached. Please do not gift wrap any of the items.

The employees of Grand Haven Township will deliver all toys and gifts to the Salvation Army for their Holiday Assistance Programs.

During March, the Township Board will consider whether GHT should adopt an ordinance that will only allow the use of consumer fireworks on the 30 days associated with the listed holidays or whether consumer fireworks should continue to be allowed all 365 days each year.

If you would like to share your opinion with the Board, please contact the Township Manager (*Bill Cargo*) by either sending an email to bcargo@ght.org or phoning (616) 604-6324.

SHAKE YOUR MAILBOX

This is a good time to check your mailbox. The weather is conducive to shaking it out to see what repairs are needed. Doing it now will save many headaches as compared with waiting until winter.

If you can physically shake your mailbox and it "gives", even just a little, it may give out when the snow and ice removal operations commence.

In addition to making sure your mailbox is strong enough to survive winter, clearing snow to the right (the approach side) of your driveway will help reduce

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