

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### October 26th through November 24th

Fall leaf drop-off program.

### November 25th through December 15th

Township Angel Tree program (in Township Administration building lobby).

### November 28th and 29th

Township offices closed.

### December 1st

Winter taxes are received and can be paid.

### February 14, 2014

Last day to pay 2013 winter property taxes without a late penalty of 3%.

### February 28, 2014

Last day for local treasurers to collect 2013 property taxes.



## MONEY TALK

The first goal of the Township's Strategic Plan is to:

### **Maintain a Healthy Financial Balance that Reflects Current Revenues and Future Projections.**

In other words, be smart with the residents' money.

From a "big picture" perspective, most of the news is good. The Township came through the so-called "great recession" in a strong financial position, maintaining its "AA Stable" credit rating from Standard and Poors. The Township has reserves in its major funds that exceeds \$7 million as noted below:

- General Fund = \$1,882,239
- Fire/Rescue Fund = \$ 98,333
- Municipal Street Fund = \$ 10,119
- Police Service Fund = \$ 122,885
- DDA Fund = \$1,880,079
- Sewer Fund = \$1,367,923
- Water Fund = \$1,677,919

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Unlike your household budget or the budget of most businesses, monies from one fund cannot be intermingled with monies from another fund. For example, it is illegal for the Township to take money from the Water Fund to pay for rescue services under the Fire Fund. Each fund is essentially its own budget.

Therefore, strong reserves are important in each fund for three major reasons. First, you need cash in the bank in order to pay your monthly bills. Generally, this amount is expected to be a minimum of three months of operating expenses.

Second, you need strong reserves to pay for major capital purchases or projects. For example, in 2014 the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will complete a reconstruction of the 172nd Avenue industrial corridor including the replacement of 4,300 linear feet of cast iron water main that was installed in 1966. Because the DDA "grew" its fund balance to about \$1.9 million, this project will be able to be completed without any loans or borrowing.

*The Township Board understands that money is simply a tool to help provide high quality services for the residents.*

And finally, you need cash reserves for emergencies. Emergencies can be financial — such as the fiscal problems that local government faced during the last recession — or they can be actual disasters, manmade or natural.

Bottom line — the Strategic Plan's call for a "Healthy Financial Balance" is not about maximizing the Township's investments. It is about understanding that money is a tool that can provide high quality services.

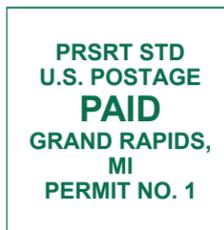
These monies will allow the Township to provide superior services, whether it is the re-surfacing of your

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## DRUG DROP-OFF SITE

The Ottawa County Public Health Department and the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office invite residents to use the Grand Haven Township drug drop-off site, which accepts both controlled and non-controlled substances. This site is located in the lobby of the GHT's administrative building at 13300 168th Avenue where a secure drop box is located that will accept medication disposal year round.

In 2010, deaths from accidental drug overdoses accounted for more deaths per year than deaths from vehicle accidents. Drug overdoses killed 38,329 people, continuing a steady rise over the past 11 years. Deaths from drug overdose are now the leading cause of deaths from accidental injury in the United States

According to Matt Allen (*i.e.*, the Environmental Health supervisor for Ottawa County) from fall 2010 to spring 2013, the Ottawa County Solid Waste Program collected about 4,300 pounds of medications for incineration, keeping kids safe and our environment clean.

For ease of use and privacy, please remove pills from their bottles and place in a Ziploc bag. Lotions, creams, and liquids may remain in their original packaging, but need to be sealed in a Ziploc bag as well.

Please remove the label or black out any personal information that might remain on the original container. We are not able to accept needles, sharps, I.V. bags or other medical waste at these sites.



# NEWSLETTER

subdivision streets, maintaining the parks and cemeteries, or ensuring that we have adequate fire protection.

## FLOOD INSURANCE

Many residents in the Township are part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

In 2012, the U.S. Congress passed the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (BW-12), which calls on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other agencies, to make a number of changes to the way the NFIP is run. Some of these changes already have occurred, and others will be implemented in the coming months. Key provisions of the legislation will require the NFIP to raise rates to reflect **true** flood risk, make the program more financially stable, and change how Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) updates impact policyholders.

In addition, BW-12 eliminates existing flood insurance subsidies.

The changes will mean premium rate increases for some—but not all—policyholders over time. For some policy holders, premium costs may increase significantly.

Homeowners and business owners that live in a flood plain or have policies through the NFIP are encouraged to learn their flood risk and talk to their insurance agent to determine if their policy will be affected by BW-12.

## HARBOR TRANSIT

Harbor Transit ridership continues to grow with an expected 195,000 rides to be provided in 2013.

If you decide that you want to utilize Harbor Transit for your transportation needs within the boundaries of Grand Haven City, Ferrysburg City, Spring Lake Village or Grand Haven Charter Township, the following “Tips” are offered:

- ◆ At least **30 to 45 minutes** prior to the time of your desired pick-up, call 842-3200. *(If you have a specific appointment you need to keep, please allow for at least 60 minutes.)*
- ◆ Under normal circumstances, the bus will arrive to pick you up within 30 to 45 minutes of your call. In order to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding, when you board the bus please tell the driver where you wish to be taken.

- ◆ If you can, please avoid peak hours, which are 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.



- ◆ Take a seat. The driver will assist with any special needs that you might have. All passengers are encouraged to use the available seat belts that are provided.

## CARDIAC MONITORS

Grand Haven Charter Township Fire/Rescue department received a \$55,100 FEMA “Assistance to Firefighters” grant that was used to purchase two Zoll cardiac monitors.

These new cardiac monitors give the paramedics capabilities of using the most advanced equipment available. GHT is the only Advanced Life Support (ALS) fire department or ambulance service in West Michigan that has this new advanced technology.

The advanced monitors will focus on the combined therapeutic capabilities of defibrillation, pacing, and CPR quality improvement. As you may know, the Township’s Fire/Rescue Department responds to about 1,000 calls for service each year, with about 62% of these calls being medical or rescue calls.

With a rapid response time, ALS certification and top of the line equipment, the Fire/Rescue Department hopes to increase the survival rate of witnessed heart attacks in our community and increase the safety for you and your household members.

## FIRE ENGINE SOLD

Grand Haven Charter Township sold a 1989 fire engine to a fire department from South Dakota. The sale price was for **\$20,000**, which was returned to the Fire/Rescue Fund.

## PATHWAY MAINTENANCE

The third goal of the Township’s Strategic Plan is to:

**Maintain and Improve the Infrastructure that is Necessary to Enhance the Community’s Health, Safety, and Quality of Life.**

In other words, take care of what you got.

Over two decades ago, the Township began the installation of our “non-motorized” pathway system that currently exceeds 22 miles.

The pathways are a great transportation and recreation asset for our community. And, as the bonds (*i.e., loan*) for these pathways were fully paid in 2008, many in the community are asking for extensions to the pathway system.

The segments that are most frequently requested and which were included in the Township’s Five-Year Recreation Plan include:

- ◆ Adding a pathway on 144th Avenue from Mercury Drive south to Lincoln Street. (1.5 miles)
- ◆ Adding a pathway on Lincoln Street from 144th Avenue west to 152nd Avenue. (1.0 miles)
- ◆ Adding a pathway connector on 152nd Avenue between Ferris Street and Lincoln Street. (0.5 miles)
- ◆ Adding a pathway on Lincoln Street between 152nd Avenue west to Lakeshore Drive. (2.5 miles)
- ◆ Adding a pathway on Buchanan Street from US-31 west to Lakeshore Drive. (1.75 miles)
- ◆ Adding a pathway connector between Ferris Street and Lincoln Street along the 168th Avenue right-of-way. (0.5 miles)
- ◆ Adding a pathway on Groesbeck street from 152nd Avenue west to the end. (1.1 miles)
- ◆ Adding a paved shoulder along Lake Michigan Drive from Lakeshore Drive east to US31 Highway. (1.8 miles)

However, just as important as looking to expand the pathway system is ensuring the current pathways are maintained.

Over the coming months, the Township Board will be completing a plan to identify what segments of pathway should be added and developing a maintenance schedule for extending the useful life of the current pathways.

## MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

A brief sampling of a few recent maintenance projects includes the following:

- ⇒ 3.45 miles of roadways resurfaced.
- ⇒ Re-coating the Mercury Park in-line skating rink.
- ⇒ Replaced 500 MXU battery packs for residential radio-read water meters.
- ⇒ Install pathway and facilities at the 152nd Avenue road end
- ⇒ Upgrade cathodic protection for lift stations and water tanks.
- ⇒ Replace water meter and pressure regulation valves at the US31/M-45 connection to the Grand Rapids water system.
- ⇒ Flow-tested and lubricated 715 hydrants and replaced 1 hydrant.
- ⇒ Installation of chemical feed system to control odor at the East Ferris Street sanitary sewer lift station.

Although the Township will examine grant opportunities to help fund any improvements, any extension of the pathway system or significant maintenance program will require voter approval of a millage rate increase.

If you have any thoughts or opinions on where new pathways should be added or want to report any maintenance issues with the current pathways, please email the Township at [info@ght.org](mailto:info@ght.org) or call 842-5988.

