



Vol.II Issue 2

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ONTWA TOWNSHIP

July 2015

NEWS FROM THE TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR, John Bossler: This is the third edition of our Township Newsletter. The newsletter is intended to share important news and information with our township property owners and residents about the beautiful community we live in.

Progress on the Wastewater System- The present township administration committed to resolve two (2) important long-standing issues with our Wastewater System. We had to ensure discharge of existing wastewater was in compliance with our permits. We also had to reduce unnecessary costs in how we operated and maintained the system. The good news is we have done both. The diligent efforts of our Wastewater Board led the way for improvement. Last year the combination of excessive chemical usage, fines, and penalties for permit violations amounted to well over \$200,000. This year we expect that number to be between \$30,000 and \$35,000, a saving of close to \$175,000 per year. In addition, we just successfully completed the fifth month of our six-month Consent Agreement with Elkhart that requires us to meet our Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) discharge specifications. One more successful month and the long-standing H₂S major problem will be behind us.

Budget- Every township is required by state law to adopt a balanced budget for their fiscal year. We developed and approved our budget in March for FY 2016, which spans from April 1, 2015 thru March 31, 2016. This year's operating budget is balanced without dipping into our General Fund reserves and what was called the Budget Stabilization Account. I urge every taxpayer to look at the budget information on our website, www.ontwatwp.org. Particularly look at the Budget Narrative, which explains, in detail, each significant line item. As of the end of June, we are on track to meet all requirements of the FY2016 Budget.

Transparency in Government- Another objective was to bring best business practices to our township government. To that end, we established a compensation committee to compare compensation of our township employees, both elected and salaried, to similar organizations in the Michiana area. Job descriptions have been written for all employees, including both statutory requirements and compensation for additional duties. Purchasing policies have been established including a purchase order system and formal competitive requirements on certain levels of township expenditures.

Ease of Access- Our website www.ontwatwp.org continues to expand. In addition to the budget and financial information, it contains relevant Township Ordinances, the agendas and the minutes of board meetings, announcements, key contact information, fees & forms, and links to other web sites that you will find useful.

Initiatives-in-Progress- Township ordinances have been organized and can be found in the clerk's office. Some ordinances are being reviewed to ensure they are up-to-date and enforceable. We are currently revising the noise and blight ordinances, along with proposing an updated Inter-Local agreement with the ambulance service. A proposed public road end ordinance has been written and is under review. This is designed to curtail the disturbances at Garver Lake, although it will be applicable to all public road ends at lakes in the township. We also will soon try a "test" recycling program on Township property, based on citizen requests and input.

Volunteers- Interested in helping your local government? We have occasional openings on several boards and committees. Most positions are compensated for meeting attendance, some are not. We are particularly interested in people with experience in grant writing. Many of the projects we are currently considering (bike trails, tornado sirens, township parks, watershed studies) can be largely funded by grants from the State and Federal governments. We need some help tapping those resources. Please call the Supervisor at 269-663-2347 or e-mail ontwatownshipsupervisor@gmail.com to volunteer. My office hours are 9am thru 1pm, Monday thru Thursday.

Suggestions- We are always interested in suggestions from our citizens. Drop a note in our suggestion box, or even better yet, come to the township board of trustees meeting held the second Monday of the month to discuss.

NEWS FROM THE TOWNSHIP TREASURER, Meryl Christensen: My Office hours are Monday thru Friday, 9:00 am thru 12:00 noon. Other times to meet with me can be arranged by appointment. During July, All Property Owners will be mailed their Summer Tax Bills. For those who escrow their taxes, a copy of the Summer Tax Bill will be mailed to your mortgage company for payment. Please contact me in the Township Office if you have a question about your Tax Bill.

NEWS FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK, Teri Mc Naughton: Our Township has implemented a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policy, to comply with State Law. The FOIA policy permits access to most government documents. The policy outlines the standardized procedures, forms, and costs relative to requests for information. The FOIA policy is posted on our website for your review. When I am not in the office, I can be reached at 269-277-4524 any day of the week, as I am not limiting the times to serve citizens.

NEWS FROM CASS COUNTY COMMISSIONER, Roseann Marchetti- Here are a few dates of interest to Cass County District 4 residents:

- July 18, 2015, Run Eddie Run, 5 k, sponsored by the Edwardsburg Fire Auxiliary and the Edwardsburg Public School Foundation.
- August 1, 2015, Eagle Lake Marine Triathlon.
- August 2 -8, Cass County Fair at the county fairgrounds. Tuesday, Aug 4, Kiddie Day, \$10.00 one price for all day rides; Thursday, Aug 6, Senior Day, seniors 60 years of age or older enjoy free admission to the Fair.
- August 15, 2015, Cass County Used Passenger Tire drop-off from 9:00 am until noon at the Cass County Fairgrounds. This is a free service sponsored by the County Board of Commissioners.
- The Adamsville Road resurfacing project will begin August 20, 2015. Rieth-Riley was awarded the bid for the work which will involve the complete milling of the surface of the road and the spreading of new asphalt on Adamsville Road from May Street south to the county line. The County Road Commission will oversee the project.

