
Oakfield Township Outlook

Winter 2019/2020

10300 14 Mile Rd, Rockford, MI. 49341
Phone: (616) 754-5679 Fax: (616) 754-0989
Office Hours Mon. – Thur. 8-12 noon & 1-5pm on Tues. & Wed.



From the Supervisor:

Summer has passed, fall is gone and winter is upon us and I have to say I think we have had enough rain between last spring and this fall. With that being said, our road project this past summer on 13 Mile Road between Wabasis and Podunk went well. Just over half is paved and the County will start on tree removal on the second half this winter. Come spring they will start construction on the second half and the entire project will be complete by the fall 2020. The subject of paving in the future will be taken up at budget time depending on Township funds and traffic counts. I would like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Oakfield Township Supervisor, *Greg Dean*

Zoning News & Notes:

Winter has arrived and with it new construction is slowing down. I receive questions about pole barns being constructed on vacant property. This is not allowed if there are no residential buildings on the property.

When you are constructing a new home and want to also construct a pole barn at the same time you will need zoning permits for both structures. When applying for zoning permits please come into the office and submit drawings for the building that you want to build. It is also necessary that you have the building site staked out as to the placement of the structures so that I can complete the inspection to make sure the set backs are met.

Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season.

Roger Mason
Zoning Administrator
Oakfield Township



The Treasurer's Desk:

We hope you are enjoying fall and that you have a safe winter. It is time to send tax bills once again and we wanted to review a few key issues.

2019 WINTER TAXES ARE DUE DECEMBER 2, 2019 AND PAYABLE UNTIL FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2020 WITHOUT INTEREST AND PENALTY. MARCH 3, 2020 TAXES MUST BE PAID AT THE COUNTY.

Payment Options:

Check or money order preferred. Please write legibly and include parcel number(s) and telephone number. Payments made through your Bank Bill Pay, DO NOT arrive at the township on the date you pay them. Please allow enough time for mailed payments to reach the township before the deadline. **POSTMARKS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AS ON TIME PAYMENTS.** If your check is not honored by the bank, the tax is considered unpaid and will be restored to the tax roll without further notice. If paying with cash, please bring exact change. *Credit or debit cards are not accepted.* Tax collection hours are Monday 8am-noon, Tuesday and Wednesday 8am-noon & 1pm-5pm, Thursday 8am-noon. The township office is closed on Fridays.

THERE ARE A FEW IMPORTANT THINGS TO CHECK AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE YOUR TAX BILL.

ESCROW ACCOUNTS FOR TAXES

If your taxes are paid from an escrow account, your copy of the tax bill should state under the “**Escrow Message**” (top left corner), that your bill has been sent to your mortgage company or the tax service that services your mortgage company. If this message does not appear on your tax bill, **you** are responsible for paying. You should contact your mortgage holder and resolve the problem.

PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION

Look in the top section of your bill under “Tax Detail” to verify you have the 100% Principal Residence Exemption (PRE). If you qualify, and the exemption is in place, the tax detail portion of your bill will state “PRE % 100.000”. By State of Michigan standards, you must own and occupy your home on or before June 1st of the current year, and November 1st for the winter. It must be the only property for which you have filed. If you think you qualify for a principal residence exemption, and don't have it, please contact our assessor, Matthew Smith, at 754-5679. The exemption reduces the School Operating Tax for **Cedar Springs** and **Rockford** School Districts on the **summer** bill, and **Greenville, Belding** and **Rockford** School Districts for the **winter** bill.

REVIEW YOUR TAX BILL FOR ACCURACY

We would again encourage you to read and review your bill for accuracy. Is your name and address correct? Is your principal residence exemption up to date? If you have moved and still own the property, please notify the Township of your change of address. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TAXES EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T RECEIVE THE BILL BECAUSE OF A WRONG MAILING ADDRESS.** We strive to keep all information current, but with continued activity of sales, building and parcel splits, errors can occur. Some changes take time to clear through the system so if you have a question on your parcel, please call our office for conformation of status.

IF YOU WANT A RECEIPT, PLEASE ENCLOSE BOTH PORTIONS OF THE TAX BILL WITH YOUR CHECK AND A STAMPED, LEGAL SIZE SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. WE WILL RETURN THE TOP PORTION.

**If you find any discrepancies on the bill or have any questions, please contact us immediately. The phone number is (616) 754-5679.

THE LAST DAY TO PAY WINTER TAXES, WITHOUT INTEREST & PENALTY, IS FRIDAY FEBRUARY 14th, 2020, if the office is closed you may use the drop box. Postmarks are NOT accepted as on time payments. Unpaid taxes are delinquent March 3 and must be paid at the county.

Larry D. Parker, Treasurer and Betsy Koett, Deputy Treasurer



Clerk's Corner:

As you probably know 2020 will be a busy election year. You may want to consider voting absentee to avoid lines and complete your ballot in the comfort of your own home.

Due to the passage of proposal 3 in 2018 you no longer need a reason to vote absentee. This means anyone can request an absentee ballot and/or be placed on the permanent absentee ballot list. Drop by or give us a call and we will be happy to take care of that for you!

2020 Election Dates:

March 10, 2020 Presidential Primary

August 4, 2020 State Primary

November 3, 2020 General Election

2020 CENSUS: Everyone should be receiving the 2020 Census in mid-March. Please take the time to fill yours out. It is required and it is our civic duty. Our community benefits by receiving fair government representation and federal funding. Stand up and be COUNTED!

Stop in and see us or give us a call if you have any questions!

Merry Christmas and Happy 2020!

Linda VanHouten, Clerk

Bonnie Rausch, Deputy Clerk



Assessor's Desk:

Please check your Tax Bill for correct spelling, addresses and legal descriptions.

If you receive a Tax Bill and are no longer the owner of the property, please give us a call so we can get a Tax Bill to the new owner.

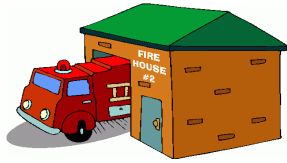
The State of Michigan has changed the due dates for Principal Residence Exemption from May 1 for current year taxes to June 1 for current year taxes and November 1, for current year winter taxes. It's a savings for property owners that purchase between June 1 and November 1 and live in a school district that collects non homestead in the winter.

The State of Michigan has changed the requirements for 100% Disabled Veterans to receive an exemption from Property tax, they no longer have to have the Adapted Housing Grant, they only need to be 100% disabled or 70% disabled and unable to work. VA disability affidavits are available at the Township Hall.

Also another change to help tax payers, if you sell property to a blood relative to the first degree, you or your spouse's, mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter etc. It does not uncap the property; this took effect Jan. 1, 2014. Please remember to check the appropriate box on the Property Transfer Affidavit.

Matthew J. Smith

Oakfield Township Assessor



Fire Department:

Welcome to the beginning of another great winter here in Oakfield Township. As the temperature drops, and we begin to fire up the woodstoves, fireplaces, and furnaces, take a few minutes and check out a few essentials that will ensure your safety through the season. First, check your chimneys and stove pipes for buildup, which can lead to smoke backup into the home and also cause chimney fires. Second make sure your carbon monoxide detectors are in good working order.

As the snow and ice make their way into our area, remember to keep your walkways and driveways as clear as possible, so emergency workers will be able to access your home should the need arise.

Lastly, as the snow piles build up, please make sure your address signs do not get buried, as it really adds to the length of time it takes trying to find your home in an emergency. And, as always, if you are in need of a reflective address sign, please keep in mind that they are available through your Fire Department at a cost of only \$15.00. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance.

Sam Peterson, Fire Chief

Fire Auxiliary Commission:

The Auxiliary is a small group that actively supports the firefighters of Oakfield Township. We organize fundraisers and give our support when needed at fire scenes by providing snacks water and sometimes coffee. We meet four times a year for about an hour and a few other times throughout the year for activities. There are currently open positions on the auxiliary if you are interested in becoming part of our group.

A look at what the auxiliary has done this year:

Auxiliary Annual Picnic- A gathering of our firefighters and their families.

This cook out is a special time enjoying food and games to show our appreciation to the firefighters for all their work, dedication, and sacrifice.

Halloween Open House- Our Station was open during trick or treating on Halloween night. We had many visitors come to enjoy a break from the bitter cold and snow. Treats of donuts, cider, coffee and candy made this a spectacular event.

Ice Cream Social/Retirement celebration- November 3rd we celebrated the retirement of Deputy Chief Brett Laitila with the presentation of a plaque for his 27 years of service. Thank you for your dedicated service Brett. Each of the firefighters were also presented with a gift bag of items from the auxiliary as a thank you for their service as well. Cake and ice cream was enjoyed by all.

Upcoming events:

Versiti Blood Donation- 2020 will be our fourth year welcoming Versiti Blood (formerly Michigan Blood) to Oakfield Township for blood drives.

Our last drive was held on September 26 and we had a wonderful attendance. Dates for 2020 are March 4, May 6, July 1, September 2, October 28 and December 30. All from 3-7 pm at the Fire Barn. Please consider coming in to donate as blood is always in need.

Chili Cook Off- Our 3rd annual Chili Cook Off will take place on Jan. 11, 2020. Work on perfecting your recipe and be ready to enter this fun contest.

Flower Baskets- Watch for information in the spring for our annual hanging basket fundraiser. Get beautiful flowers and support your local fire dept.

For Sale- Make sure in the time of need your house number can be clearly seen. If you would like to purchase a reflective house number sign contact the department (616) 754-5122 the price is \$15.

Any questions feel free to call Jasmine Dombrowski, secretary at (616) 824-9829



Oakfield Historical Commission

Oakfield Township Historical Commission News – Winter, 2020

This past summer, descendants of one of our original pioneer families had a reunion and members came to the Oakfield Museum to learn more about their family and the early days of the township. If YOU or your family has a heritage in the township, bring them to the museum to learn more! Better yet, share your heritage with our museum so we can ALL learn more! In 2020, we would like to feature some of our pioneer families in our displays. Artifacts from a family will be displayed, along with other information about their lives in the early days, etc. If YOU would like your family to be included with a special display, please contact Sharon Bouck at 616-754-4553. Family photos, documents, garments or other artifacts can be included.

The Oakfield Museum building was built in 1901 as the meeting hall of the Oakfield Centre Arbor of the Gleaners, an insurance company for farmers or those connected to farming. New members had to be voted in, using a ballot box and marbles- white for "yes" and black for "no". If a member got three or more black marbles or "no" votes, they were "black balled" and were not allowed to be members.

Approved members had to learn a lot of secret rituals and go through an initiation such as "riding the goat". Our Gleaner Goat artifact is perhaps the only one still in existence! In fact, the Gleaner Insurance office "borrowed" our goat to take to their fall

conference and it was so rare it became a "star" of the event, labeled "... a vintage mechanical goat on loan from the Oakfield Township Museum west of Greenville, Michigan." Did you or an ancestor ever "ride the goat" or get "blackballed"?

We received a copy of "Gleaner memories" from another arbor, which describes what their typical meeting was like back in the day when it provided the social life of a community. Reading those memories, one can picture the same things happening right in our own building and Oakfield Centre community in Podunk: the wood stoves for heat (we have the original one from our building), the polished floors from the dances (upstairs), piano (the hole in the stage floor where it was hoisted from below), wood benches, etc. Come and see for yourself!

The Oakfield Museum on south Podunk Road is now closed for the winter but will reopen May 2 and 3 for the Annual Spring into the Past open house tours of the Tri-River Historical Museum Network, when all member museums are open that Saturday from 11 am to 5 pm and Sunday from noon to 5 pm. After that our museum will be open the second and fourth Sundays of June through September from 2 to 4 pm.

We need folks like YOU to get involved in the history of Oakfield Township and the museum. We would welcome volunteers to help organize, clean, record, digitize, index, and many other needs! Call Sharon Bouck, 754-4553 to learn more and see how you can get involved.

Hope to see you at the museum!



Meeting Schedule:

Township Board of Trustees:

7:00 p.m. 2nd Tuesday of each month

Planning Commission:

7:00 p.m. 3rd Tuesday of the month. Meets quarterly, additionally as needed.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

7:00 p.m. 4th Tuesday of the month as needed.



10300 14 Mile Road

Rockford, MI. 49341

Phone: 616-754-5679

Fax: 616-754-0989

Web Site: oakfieldtwp.org

Oakfield Township Board of Trustees:

William Greg Dean, Supervisor

Linda L. VanHouten, Clerk

Larry Parker, Treasurer

Trustees: Bryan Porter, Pamela Riker, Ken Rittersdorf, and
Chad Sowerby

Assessor- Matthew Smith

1-5 pm Monday, 8-12 & 1-5 pm Tuesday, 1-5 pm Wednesday

Zoning Administrator – Roger Mason

6:00 to 7:00 pm Tuesday

9:30 to 11:00 am Saturday

Building Inspector- P.C.I.

8:30 am to 10:30 Tuesday and Thursday

Fire Chief- Sam Peterson

8 am – 4 pm Monday – Friday

Burn Permits: Fire Barn 754-5122