

# Oakfield Township Outlook

## Winter 2024

**10300 14 Mile Road  
Rockford, MI 49341**

Phone: (616) 754-5679

Fire Department Phone: (616) 754-5122

Website: [www.oakfieldtwp.org](http://www.oakfieldtwp.org)

### **Office Hours**

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Tuesday and Wednesday 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Supervisor – William Greg Dean**

**Clerk – Sue Trainer**

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Treasurer – Betsy Koett**

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Assessor – Matthew Smith**

Tuesday and Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Building Inspector – P.C.I.**

Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

**Fire Chief – Sam Peterson**

Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Trustees**

David Howard, Pamela Riker, Ken Rittersdorf, Chad Sowerby



### **From the Supervisor:**



When I ran for office 32 years ago, Oakfield Township had \$80,000 on hand and was \$59,000 in debt. For all purposes, the township was broke, and I promised to get us on a good fiscal standing. I have done that. When I leave office November 20, 2024, the township's cash on hand will be in excess of \$1,500,000 and there is no debt. I have kept my word on fiscal standing.

When I ran for office, I promised to build a park at the township hall, and we did that. I even donated \$4,000 of my own money. I kept my word, and we built the park.

When I took office, the township had not graveled a road in over 30 years. In the past 32 years, the township has graveled every gravel road twice.

When I took office, the township had only paved one road in 20 years. In the past 32 years, the township has paved 15 miles of roads. This year, we have also reworked 9 miles of paved roads with a chip and seal overlay.

When I took office 32 years ago, the township had two junk yards, and I promised to close them down. They are gone; promise kept. One of those junk yards had over 300,000 scrap tires, and I filed for three state scrap tire grants, which were awarded. The tires were removed, and another promise kept.

When I took office, the township had two houses that were eye sores and were dangerous buildings. We got rid of them. I secured a federal grant to remove one of them because it was within one mile of a school.

When I took office, the previous township board had taken ownership of the Oakfield Center Dam on Podunk Road, which was a mistake. Within six months, the State of Michigan condemned the dam. This dam controlled the lake level of Wabasis Lake, so the township set up a lake level. Then the

township, the County Park Commission, and all the waterfront property owners shared in the cost to build a new dam. It took two years to get it done, but it was worth it in the long run. When I took office, the township hall was in a state of disrepair. New exterior doors and sidewalks had to be installed, a rework of the restrooms had to be done, and the roof had to be replaced. Also, when they built the township hall, there was no fireproof storage, so we added a vault to the west side of the township hall.

When I took office, the fire department was also in a state of disrepair, so we added on new truck bays, reworked the old part into a training room, and installed new restrooms so there was one for men and one for women. We built a new pole barn for fire department storage and installed an eight-inch water well to fill the fire trucks with water. We have continually upgraded the fire department equipment and trucks. With that said, I believe we have one of the best equipped fire departments in Kent County.

When I took office, the cemetery maps were in a state of disrepair, so we had new maps made. We also installed new water wells and fences at Oakfield Cemetery and White Swan Cemetery.

Some residents think that I am a hard-nosed supervisor, but if that is what it takes to get the job done, it is what it is. I am proud of my record and the fiscal state of the township with no debt. We never borrow money and pay cash for every purchase or project, and we still have a large amount of cash on hand. I leave office with no regrets. The state of the township is good.

To the new supervisor: you said it was time for a change; I already delivered the change to Oakfield Township.

*Greg Dean  
Oakfield Township Supervisor*



### **From the Assessor:**

Please check your tax bill for correct homestead exemption status, spelling, addresses and legal descriptions. If you receive a tax bill and are no longer the owner of the property, please call us, so we can get a tax bill to the new owner.

VETERANS: Please file your VA letter along with the State Tax Commission Affidavit for Disabled Veterans Exemption (form 5107) with the assessor's office prior to December 31, 2024 in order to receive your tax exemption for 2024.

Finally, Oakfield Township offers an exemption from property taxes if your household income is below the federal poverty guidelines. If you believe you qualify for an exemption from property taxes for 2024 due to poverty/low income, contact me as soon as possible to begin the application process. You will be required to provide copies of your state and federal income tax returns or Michigan Department of Treasury form 4988 for all members of your household. Please feel free to contact me at the township office on Tuesdays or Wednesdays with any questions regarding the poverty exemption program or any other assessing related matters.

*Matthew J. Smith  
Oakfield Township Assessor  
Marissa Brunette  
Oakfield Township Deputy Assessor*



### **The Treasurer's Desk:**

You will be receiving your 2024 Winter Tax Bill on or around December 1, 2024. These taxes are payable until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 14, 2025 without interest and penalty. Starting March 1, 2025, delinquent taxes must be paid at Kent County. Please read the back of your tax bill for more detailed information.

*Betsy N. Koett, Treasurer  
Amy Christensen, Deputy Treasurer*



### **Clerk's Corner:**



The November election will be the General Election (Presidential) on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. The 9 days of Early Voting for this election will start on Saturday, October 26, 2024 and end on Sunday, November 3, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ALL registered voters are now eligible to vote absentee if you have met the photo ID rule when you registered to vote. Absentee voting is a method of voting in which you can receive and mark the ballot before Election Day.

- Absentee voting applications are available 75 days before each election. Ballots are available 45 days prior to each election.
- If you want to vote absentee in any upcoming or future elections, submit an application for a ballot to our office. A voter can now submit a single application requesting to receive an absentee ballot for every election.
- We will issue a ballot to you once we have your application processed and ballots are available.
- You can review the candidates and proposals and mark your vote(s) at your leisure.
- Once you have made your selection(s) on the ballot, seal it in the return ballot envelope. The ballot envelope must be signed by the voter ONLY.
- The clerk's office MUST receive the ballot no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.
- The absentee voting process can take place in person, by mail, or by depositing it in our new Absent Voter Ballot Drop Box, which is right outside the front door of Oakfield Township Hall.
- The Absent Voter Processing Board will count the absentee ballots on Election Day. YES, they do get counted!

If you are going to be at a different address, other than your permanent residence address for any election and you would like an absentee ballot sent to you, please make sure to get your alternate address and days that you will be there to the Clerk's office a month or so ahead of the election. Ballots and other election related mail do not get automatically forwarded.

*Sue Trainer, Clerk  
Barb Kaaikala, Deputy Clerk*



## **Fire Department:**

The winter months are quickly approaching once again. On November 3, remember to set your clocks back one hour and change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

This year, I would like to focus on your address. When we respond to an emergency call, we depend on your address being displayed so we can find your home. Many times, in the winter months, snowfall can hide your address signs behind snow piles or drifts, making it difficult to locate your home and adding precious time to our arrival. Please remember to keep your address signs as clear as possible.

If you need signs for your home, they can be obtained through Oakfield Township office (and made by Oakfield Fire Department) for only \$15. This is for the green reflective aluminum signs.

Have a safe and happy winter!

*Samuel Peterson  
Oakfield Township Fire Chief*

## **Historical Commission**

### **Is the Oakfield Museum a “Hidden Treasure”?**

We think it's a treasure, but it's not hidden! However, we wish more people would come to view its treasures that display the

history of YOUR Oakfield Township. It's only open the fourth Sundays of June through September --- because we have few volunteers to host the visitors. It would be open more often if more people would get interested and involved.

What would you see at the Museum?

- White Swan school history with artifacts as old as 1852 and a photo to prove it.
- Church history with the church bell and cornerstone from the Oakfield Union Chapel.
- History of the Gleaners who built the museum building originally as their meeting place and community center, which later became the township hall.
- Government history of mail carriers and voting machines.
- Pictures of Harvard back in its hey-day when the railroad came through.
- Visit our research area to learn more about your relatives and others who settled in Oakfield.
- Upstairs are home scenes, like a kitchen with an 1889 “automatic” dishwasher!
- Military uniforms that honor our heroes.
- Agricultural artifacts from the Oakfield Centre/Podunk Mill, famous for its buckwheat flour.
- Bean sorter, honey extractor, milk separator, and other agricultural items that attest to Oakfield being a farming community.
- Imagine the events that took place on the stage and see which businesses on the sideboards are still in business today!

Have YOU been to the Oakfield Museum? Don't you think it's time you visited?

Unfortunately, it is closed until May of 2025, but private tours can be arranged. Contact Sharon Bouck at 616-754-4553.



### **Meeting Schedule:**

#### ***Township Board of Trustees:***

6:30 p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month

#### ***Planning Commission:***

7:00 p.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month

\*meets quarterly, additionally as needed

### **Oakfield Community Blood Drives**

Oakfield Township continues to sponsor our blood drives in partnership with Versiti Blood of Michigan.

2023: Whole Blood – 87 units

Double Red Blood Cells – 18 units

2024: Whole Blood – 61 units

Double Red Blood Cells – 22 units

Each donation has the potential to save 3 lives. To sign up online, go to

<https://donate.versiti.michigan.org/donor/auth/signin>.

The upcoming dates for are as follows:

- 12:30-5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 30, 2024
- 12:30-5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12, 2025
- 12:30-5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7, 2025
- 12:30-5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 2, 2025
- 12:30-5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 3, 2025
- 12:30-5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 29, 2025
- 12:30-5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 30, 2025

### **Who do I talk to if I have a question about...**

- Commercial property zoning or questions, special use questions, or general township questions/concerns? **Supervisor Greg Dean**
- Combinations or splits of property, Principal Residence Exemption (PRE), Property Transfer Affidavit (PTA), Veteran's Exemption, Poverty Exemption, assessed value of my property, or name/address changes? **Assessor Matthew Smith**
- Elections, absentee voting, FOIAs, notarizing documents, or cemeteries?  
**Clerk Sue Trainer**
- My tax bill, special assessments, or escrow questions? **Treasurer Betsy Koett**
- Scram Lake billing, hall rentals, ball field reservations, or dog licenses?  
**Receptionist Amy Christensen**
- Burn permits or reflective address signs?  
**Fire Chief Sam Peterson**
- Zoning, building any structure (house, addition, pole barn, fence, etc.) on my property, or permits for building, electrical, mechanical, or plumbing?  
**Professional Code Inspections (PCI)**  
**616-877-2000**