

SANDS TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

Summer 2020

OFFICE COMPLEX HOURS: MON, WED, THURS & FRI 10 AM-3 PM, TUES 1:30-6:30 PM
987 S. State Hwy M-553, Gwinn, MI 49841. Ph (906) 249-9169 Fax (906) 249-2120

Website—www.sandstownship.org E-mail—office@sandstownship.org

CORONAVIRUS & SANDS TOWNSHIP

ELECTED TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Supervisor— Darlene Walch
249-9945

Clerk—Lee Yelle
346-4423

Treasurer— Kent Koehn

Trustee— Justin Yelle
360-3038

Trustee—David Kallio
249-3418

APPOINTED TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Zoning Administrator
Randall Yelle 346-4423

PLANNING COMMISSION

Shelley Brauer (Chair)
Justin Yelle
Suzanne Sundell
Pamela Lajewski-Pearson
Cory Bushong

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Robert Vietzke (Chair)
Shelley Brauer
David Kallio
Victoria Jenema
Jane Noe
Ron Titter (alternate)

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire Chief—Andrew Sicotte

Assistant Chiefs
Hall #1—Ben Yelle
Hall #2—Terry Sleeter

EMS Coordinator
Lyn Nelson

Assistant Coordinator
Frank Rosado

Since March, Sands Township has monitored the coronavirus pandemic, taking information and guidance from several sources including the Michigan Governor's Executive Orders; Michigan Townships Association; national Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). Consistent with MI Governor's Executive Order (2020-97), Sands Township prepared and adopted a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan which covers employees and facilities. The plan is available on our website.

Our plan covers workplace safety practices; procedures in the event of employee suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19; and public and recreational facilities. The appendices address prevention guidelines and symptoms and our reopening plan, which is a phased plan correlated to Michigan's reopening plan. Township offices and gymnasium will remain closed to the public until we are confident that we can provide a safe environment for employees and residents.

Sands Township has been fortunate, as has much of the UP, to have few cases of COVID-19. However, the number of cases has been increasing as summer activities, travel and holidays take place. We encourage you to take this virus seriously and continue practicing prevention strategies: frequent hand washing; use of hand sanitizer when water isn't available; maintain social distancing; wear a face mask; and avoid contact with someone who is sick.

We hope that by employing these basic prevention practices we can reverse the current trend and lower the number of cases. It's heartening to see our businesses begin to reopen and hopefully the reopening phases can continue to move forward without a need to revert to more stringent restrictions. The Sands Township Board thanks our employees and residents for your support and understanding as we grapple with this coronavirus pandemic.

Submitted by: Darlene Walch, Supervisor

NEW RECYCLING & TRANSFER FACILITY



If you cruise M553 heading south from the Crossroads, you'll pass the site of the new recycling and transfer station where construction is well underway. There were some COVID-19 related delays with materials, but we seem on track to complete the project by the end of September as planned. The new station will enable us to have all our recycling and transfer station bins indoors, which will be a great feature during winter! Partial funding for the building comes from a MI Dept of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) grant and we've received partial reimbursements for work completed so far. A grand opening will be planned once the building is completed and we can open the facility to the public.

SANITATION FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

As you might expect, costs for garbage collection have been steadily increasing over the past several years. The collection and disposal of garbage, trash, and recyclables involves many factors which are intertwined and complex. State and federal regulations, recycling markets, hauling costs, landfill tipping fees, operational costs (garbage truck, bins, recycling & transfer station facility), and employee costs impact our sanitation budget. Last year we compared the costs of maintaining the township's sanitation operations against contracting with a commercial company for those services. We were surprised to discover that it's significantly less costly to operate our own sanitation public works department.

We have a sanitation millage to help cover the cost of garbage collection. Money collected via the millage is designated for operating, disposal, and equipment expenses, but

does not include employee wages. Our current millage was approved by township voters in 2017. Each year the millage gets reduced by the Headlee millage reduction act and the current millage is set to expire in 2021.

The combination of increasing costs (primarily disposal costs and truck repairs) and reductions to our millage has recently resulted in having to augment the Sanitation budget from general funds. That solution works for the short-term, but we need to create a long-term plan, including a mechanism for replacing the garbage truck and packer within the next few years. As we look to the future, we continue to monitor our sanitation expenses and will be assessing how upcoming changes, including our Recycling & Transfer station and the county landfill recycling program, affect our costs and need for a renewed millage.

Submitted by: Darlene Walch, Supervisor

CENSUS 2020 UPDATE



As of July 15th, the current Census Response Rate for Sands Township was 72.7%. Census results help determine funding for schools, hospitals, fire departments, roads, and other things for the next ten years, including Congressional seats. We encourage everyone to respond. If you haven't received a form, you can still respond by phone at 844-330-2020. They are also still taking applications for census takers to help with the township's response rate. You can find an application at 2020census.gov/jobs.

Township Board meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM. Minutes are posted at the Township Office and Fire Hall #2. Approved minutes are available on our website.

The public is welcome to attend all meetings.

The Fire Department meets the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 7:00 PM at Station 1. The public is welcome to attend.



2020 Election Information

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges in all parts of our lives, including elections. In May, the State of Michigan mailed an Absent Voter Ballot Application to all registered voters not already on a permanent AV list. Anyone wishing to vote absentee for the August Primary, November General election, or both, just needed to select their elections, sign the form and return it to the clerk. Voters are not required to vote absentee, and the polls will still be open for in-person voting in August and November, with safety precautions in place.

The Clerk's office has been busy for the past several weeks processing the AV applications, mailing ballots, inputting the receipt of the ballots and verifying signatures. These ballots remain sealed until they are delivered to election inspectors at the polls on election day. To clarify - they are not counted early and our office does not open the envelopes.

Polls will be open 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM on election day for in-person voting. We will have safety measures in place to protect our voters and our election workers. We are asking voters to wear a mask when entering the building and to practice social distancing. We will be providing hand sanitizer and will have floor markings to help with spacing. We will also be doing additional cleaning and sanitizing of surfaces and writing utensils throughout the day, but it can't hurt if you bring your own pen! Please be patient as we try to conduct our elections safely and efficiently.

The primary election is Tuesday, August 4. As a reminder – in this election you cannot “split” your ticket. You must vote only in a single party column in the partisan section. The general election is Tuesday, November 3. In this election you can “split” your ticket and vote for candidates in any party.

Voters may register to vote by mail up to 15 days before an election, or may register in person at the Clerk's office 14 days or less before an election, or at the polls on election day (with proper proof of residency). To find out your registration status, track your absentee ballot, or preview a ballot for an upcoming election, please go to Michigan.gov/vote.

Submitted by: Lee Yelle, Clerk

TRANSFER STATION INFORMATION

Our Transfer Station is available for both recycling drop-off, and waste acceptance. This service is for residents only. There is no charge for recycling, but you must separate the fibers from rigids. Waste is accepted for a charge, with a fee structure outlined below. We accept cash or check; if you pay with cash—please bring small bills.

The Transfer Station does not accept household garbage, appliances with Freon, brush, concrete, or hazardous waste. And please—nothing that will smell! For questions on recycling, what is accepted at the transfer station, or how to dispose of items not accepted, you may call the office at 249-9169 or go to our website www.sandstownship.org.

The Transfer Station is open every Wednesday from 4—7 PM year round. Weekend hours from January—March are the 2nd Saturday of the month from 10 AM—5 PM. Beginning in April, it will be the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 10 AM—5 PM, in addition to every Wednesday.

FREE SCRAP TIRE DISPOSAL

The Marquette County landfill has received a Scrap Tire Cleanup Grant from EGLE. All Marquette County residents are welcome to bring their scrap tires to any of the collections. Residents may bring in up to 10 tires at a time. Car and truck tires that are 22.5 inches in diameter or less will be accepted at these collections, including tires on rims. Larger tires, tractor tires and tires on split rims will not be accepted. Tires from businesses will not be accepted. Please go to www.mcswwa.com/scrap-tires/ for



information on how to dispose of these larger tires. For any questions call the landfill at (906) 249-4125.

Remaining FREE tire collection dates for 2020

Wednesday, July 29 West End Transfer Station in Ishpeming (3:00—7:00)

Thursday, August 13 City of Marquette Rubbish/Compost Site (3:00—7:00)

Monday, August 24 Sands Township Transfer Station (3:00—7:00)

Saturday, September 12 Skandia/West Branch Transfer Station (9:00—3:00)

MARQUETTE COUNTY RECYCLING PROJECT

Dual to Single Stream Recycling Program

As you probably know, the Marquette County landfill is transitioning from the current dual stream recycling program to a single stream program. They have been busy with construction and renovations at the landfill over the last few months to make this change. **Beginning October 1, the dual stream program will be replaced with the single stream program.** Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the single stream equipment which is coming from Canada has been delayed. They anticipate having the new single stream equipment up and running by November 15, barring any additional delays.

From September 1 to October 15, the landfill will not be accepting any recycling on site, but they have secured space off site to store recyclables during this time. During those 6 weeks, they will be removing the existing equipment and installing the new single stream equipment, certifying the equipment, and training staff. This is also during the time period Sands Township anticipates transitioning to our new Recycling & Transfer facility. Please check the MCSWMA website and our Township website and Facebook page for more updates as the program transitions.

Glass Accepting & Repurposing

The Andela Pulverizer System, which pulverizes glass into a glass aggregate product that is uniform in size with no sharp edges, is on site at the landfill. This system produces aggregate in two different sizes – either approximately 3/8", or a number 4 mesh glass sand. This aggregate has several possible uses, such as site prep, drainage, flex base, utility pipe bedding, septic field sand, construction aggregate, termite barriers, pool filter media, landscaping, mulch/water conservation, walkways, mining backfill, and more. The MCSWMA is also working with State Legislators and Michigan Tech University to receive certification of glass that is ground to a powder called "pozzolan." Once certified, this pozzolan could replace fly ash in concrete.

The new structure should be ready for the pulverizer system to be installed by mid-September. After installation, the unit will be run through a number of safety checks and employee training and certification prior to operation. After certification, the Landfill anticipates being able to accept source separated glass beginning October 15, 2020. As Sands Township moves into the new Recycling & Transfer facility, we will begin accepting glass separately from other recyclable materials.

Please contact the office if you have questions about Sands Township recycling and participation. If you have questions about the Authority's project and program conversion, please contact Randy at the Township Office or the Landfill directly at 249-4125. Submitted by Randall L. Yelle, MCSWMA Chairman



Garbage Holidays

Garbage is affected by a holiday **ONLY IF** the holiday falls on a Tuesday or Wednesday. The only holiday for the 2020 garbage schedule is Wednesday, November 11 (Veteran's Day). Pickup will be Tuesday as usual, and Wednesday's route will be picked up on Thursday, November 12.

Garbage Crew Reminders:

Have your garbage out by 4 am.

Do not put out large items or bags heavier than 30 pounds.

Replace any cans that are cracked or broken.

In the winter—please shovel or keep cans clear and place them where they are visible with the snowbanks.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we adjusted to incorporate additional safety measures due to COVID-19.

CEMETERY INFORMATION

The Sands Township Cemetery is located on Miller Road. Water is available at the fire tank for plants and flowers. Please **NO VEHICLES AT ANY TIME ON THE GRASS AREAS!**



Lots are available at a cost of \$250 for residents, and \$350 for non residents. General cemetery maintenance is done by Nick LaMere. Graves are dug by Jamin Wonch, and Ron Tervo performs the lawn maintenance. Our cemetery sexton is Tom Redlon. For information please call: Tom Redlon, Cemetery Sexton—346-6927, or the township office.

A cemetery subcommittee closely reviewed our existing Cemetery Ordinance last summer and recommended several updates. The amended ordinance is available at the office for review.

Submitted by Tom Redlon, Cemetery Sexton

TREASURER'S NEWS

2020 summer property tax statements were mailed for July 1. If you have not received your statement or if your statement went to your escrow company and you would like a copy, please call the office. To avoid penalty, summer taxes must be paid by Monday, September 14. The 2020 winter tax statement will be mailed for December 1.

We are actively working towards being able to accept credit and debit cards for tax payments and other Township charges (landfill hauling, gym rentals, permits, etc.) Please call the office or check our website for more information as we move further along in this process.

In an unexpected twist, our treasurer Justin Murawski and his family have decided to relocate outside of Marquette County.

We thank Justin for his years of service on our Township Fire Department and for his years as our Township Treasurer. We wish him and his family the best as they move on to this new adventure.

After Justin's resignation, Kent Koehn was appointed by the Township Board July 14th to complete the term that ends in November. The Treasurer position, and all other Board member positions, will be on the November ballot.

2020 ROAD PROJECTS

We have a 5 year road maintenance plan in place, which is reviewed and updated annually to help ensure all roads in the Township get proper maintenance when needed. This plan is not set in stone, but gives a guideline of what projects we will request to be put out for bids each season. After the Marquette County Road Commission bids out the projects, the Township Board reviews the cost of each and makes a decision based on available money in our Road Millage Fund.

For the 2020 construction season, the Board has approved repaving a .53 mile section of Silver Creek Road, crack seal on Miller Road, Yelle Road and Dahlstrom Road, and the application of an overband seal, chip seal, fog seal, and spray patch in the Sicotte subdivision.



PETER WHITE PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

What a strange time we live in today! Surviving this pandemic certainly made me thankful for good health in my family and given me empathy for those who suffered with COVID19 and/or job loss. While staying at home I missed visiting the library (PWPL) and browsing among the books, magazines, and friendly people. The library is gradually reopening and changing restrictions from Phase 3 to Phase 4. The building will not yet be entirely open, but some in-person services are beginning. Safe practices are in place to maintain social distancing for patrons and staff. Wearing masks is required to enter the building until further notice. Complete information on how reopening will proceed is on the website (www.pwpl.info).

Our library staff deserves many kudos for continuing to provide as many services as possible during the state's stay-at-home orders. For example, it has been possible to reach a librarian by phone; e-books and e-audio books have been available for downloading; family packets of materials accompanied with online videos have been available for children and parents; and a variety of online programs for all ages have continued including musical performances, meditation classes, and author talks. In June Peter White Public Library moved into Phase 3 of reopening by accepting returned books in

their book drop box and offering curbside pickup of books. Patrons could order books online and pick them up safely in their vehicles.

On July 15th PWPL moved into Phase 4 of reopening. The changes include access to computers that are six feet apart and will be sanitized after each use. To access the computers, patrons need to make an appointment for an hour of use. Beginning July 20th appointments will be available to meet with staff at the Circulation Desk for services such as renewing your library card, purchasing merchandise, and asking questions. Also, on the 20th Reference Desk appointments will be available for tasks such as test proctoring or renewing passports. You can still "Book-a-Librarian" for phone reference help on Tuesdays/Thursdays from 12-2 p.m. To access the reference librarians, use the number (906) 226-4311.

For now, the number of people in the library will continue to be limited until the number of COVID cases in the community stabilizes. For additional information on Phase 4 plans and policies, continue to check the library website. Our primary election is August 4th, and there will be a millage renewal proposal for the library on the ballot. Most of all, stay safe and healthy as we weather the pandemic and all the changes it has required of each of us.

Submitted by: N. Suzanne Standerford, TAC Representative

WELL, SEPTIC & DRAIN FIELD MAINTENANCE

In these anxious and trying times, it may be hard to wrap one's mind around another health and safety issue, but here goes. Sands Township is a unit of government that does NOT have a municipal water and sewer system, therefore, all of us are on wells and drain fields. This is an area of concern to the Township. In order to continue with these relatively inexpensive systems, there is a serious issue that we all should be concerned with, that is, the regular care and cleaning of our septic systems. Septic permits generally are required once, with new home construction. After that, the owner has personal responsibility for regular septic clean out. This protects not only your investment and health, but also your neighbors'. Please keep a regular schedule for clean out and follow the recommendations of your septic hauler. Crisis-required water systems to serve a polluted area of township water supply are enormously expensive and will require the township to spend possibly millions of dollars to supply safe water to an affected area. Be a steward of your finances and a protector of you and your neighbor's health. Get it taken care of this summer, if needed, and be alert for future service needs.

Submitted by: David Kallio, Township Trustee

The Planning Commission is exploring the possibility of an Ordinance that would require the inspection of on-site sewage disposal and water supply well systems at the time of property transfer, or after standing dormant for 18 months. Contact Randy Yelle, Zoning Administrator, for more information.

TOWNSHIP INFORMATION OPEN HOUSE

Last winter, we held our first-ever Township Information Fair. We had representatives from the Township Board, Clerk's Office, Treasurer's Office, our Assessor, the Zoning Department, Parks & Recreation, the Fire Department, EMS, Recycle 906 & the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, the Senior Center, and even the census join us to share information and answer questions. We also had information on the Peter White Public Library, garbage pickup and our transfer station, road maintenance, elections, a breakdown of how your tax money is allocated, and other Township related information.

Considering this was our first event of this type and we held it in the middle of winter, we were encouraged by the people who did show and the questions they asked when here.

We hope to continue an event like this at least once a year, and had planned for early this fall, but with changes due to COVID-19 we will instead look at holding one next year.

If you have questions about anything in the Township, feel free to call or email the office any time and we will get an answer for you!



NEWSLETTER

987 S. State Hwy M-553
Gwinn, MI 49841

Striving to protect your water & environment

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TOWNSHIP ENCLOSED

Hazardous Waste Collection

The Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority holds several FREE Household Hazardous Waste Collection dates throughout the summer. For information and a list of items acceptable for this collection, please go to www.mcswma.com, or call the Landfill at (906) 249-4108.

***Marquette Rubbish/Compost Site collections—August 6,
September 3 and October 1 from 3:00—7:00***

***West End Transfer Station collections—August 19,
September 16 and October 7 from 3:00—7:00***

If you have hazardous waste, please take advantage of this free service and keep the harmful chemicals from entering the Landfill or our environment.

Scrap Tire Collection

The Landfill has once again been awarded a grant from EGLE for scrap tire collections throughout the County. Sands Township will be hosting our free scrap tire collection on **Monday, August 24, 2020** **from 3:00—7:00.**

Your newsletter is paid for with your tax dollars. We welcome your opinions and comments. Please contact the Township office or a Township Official with your suggestions or topics of concern you would like addressed.

Want to Get Involved?

Are you interested in getting involved with the Township, but aren't sure how? We need subs on our garbage truck. We are always looking for people to join our Fire Department and EMS. In busy election years we are always looking for more election inspectors. Contact the office if any of these sound like something you are interested in. If none of these sound like a good fit, but you would still like to get involved, let us know and we will see how we can use your help!

Contact Us

(906)249-9169

FAX 249-2120

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