

CHOCOLAY TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

February 2023

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Assessing

By John Gehres

The change notices went out to taxpayers in order to give them ample opportunity to review and possibly appeal their assessments. This year we have the largest increase in assessed values due to much higher sales in the last 2 years and the largest taxable value increase due to inflation. We are expecting higher than normal participants for the Board of Review, although we haven't seen a higher than normal volume of calls. We are reviewing the advertisement for a seasonal employee as our field staff moved on to a full time position in another municipality.

Clerk

By Lisa Perry

The Clerk's Department is busy setting up for the May 2, 2023 Special Election. On February 24 there were 2259 Absentee Ballot applications sent out. This has proven challenging as it is the time of year when a portion of those applications are for "snowbirds". We feel have been in contact with the majority of them to verify mailing addresses. I have also encountered voters that have moved from our jurisdiction and have not changed their driver's license.

It is very important that you change your driver's license with each move. If the move is within Michigan, our office will get notified by the State of Michigan, however, if you are moving out of the State, it would be helpful to notify your Clerk's office as we do not get notified. This helps to keep our

voting records up to date and prevents any extra mailings.

If you are on the absentee voting list, you may have noticed there was a postage paid envelope included with the application. This is one of the results of Proposal 22-2 that was passed by Michigan voters in November 2022. Voters will also see a postage paid envelope to return their ballot. The absentee ballots will be going out the last week of March.

If you have any questions regarding the permanent absentee voting list or elections in general, please contact the Clerk's office during business hours.

Fire Department

By Lee Gould

Our fire truck replacement has been completed! Equipment has been transitioned to the new truck and it is in service. Closing out a 3-year fire truck replacement project brings relief to the department due to the amount of time it takes to go through the replacement process. Fire truck replacement in today's technology driven world is vastly different than former fire trucks replaced. Former trucks didn't come with so many options and decisions to make. It was a learning process that has set up the department to be better for future truck replacement.

We will slowly begin to transition to the spring season in March. With the loss of our brush truck in the fall of 2022, we are adapting to life without it until we can replace it. This means our other apparatus will have to help fill that void along with



mutual aid fire departments when a smaller brush truck is needed.

Call volume has been slower than normal for this winter. But after 20 years on the department, everything cycles so we take the quiet and slower times to train more and be better prepared when the call volume picks up.

Public Works

By Brad Johnson

We have completed our first round of interviews for the Public Works Technician position. The first round of interviews are Brad, Chris, Joe and Lori. The second round will be held by Bill and Brad.

The second week of February we had a very welcome warm up, however the melt off left us with rock solid banks after they refroze. When the banks get this hard it makes it very difficult to plow snow into them and even harder to blow the banks back.

The ice rink at the Lions field was a complete flop this year due to the abnormal weather conditions. We received less than a handful of calls regarding this which leaves me to believe they understand how critical the weather is for making ice rinks.

Technology

By Dale Throenle

As many of you already know, the Township has converted to a new phone system. This system gives the staff additional capability of routing calls, answering calls, and leaving messages for staff members when the offices are closed.

Staff is working with a website vendor to develop a new Township web site. The current site is about eight years old and is not a mobile-friendly site. Primary goals for the site are to make information easier to find and available for use on mobile devices (tablets, phones, etc.) A first draft of the site will be presented at the Township Board meeting in March.

The Township is exploring different ways to connect to the public; one of those options is called FlashVote. FlashVote will be used to do quick surveys throughout the year on a variety of Township-oriented topics. The surveys will be limited to five questions, with the idea that users can take the survey quickly and get immediate feedback on their entries. Users will be able to sign up to get survey notifications, and data will be analyzed internally as a method of providing data to the Board and Commissions regarding survey topics. Staff have tested the software internally, and will be rolling out the first survey in the near future.

Planning / Zoning

By Dale Throenle

Planning Commission

The Planning Commissioners participated in two meetings on February 13 in the Township Fire Hall.

The first meeting was a joint meeting between the Township Board and the Planning Commission.

Roger Zappa, Township Attorney, presented detailed information regarding the potential rezoning of the Agriculture / Forestry district (AF). After his presentation, both Board members and Commissioners discussed the information presented and how that would apply to the new zoning ordinance. The Board gave the direction to the Commissioners to continue to work on the zoning ordinance, with the intent of presenting an ordinance that was easy to read and reasonably easy to enforce.

There was one item on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting.

New Business

1) Joint Meeting Discussion

Commissioners discussed the directions, comments, and concerns from the joint meeting. Much of the discussion centered on process and how to continue with the writing of the new zoning ordinance.



Commissioners decided on four agenda items for the March meeting:

1. Hearing to discuss rezoning of properties in the Industrial district on south US 41 South
2. Determine first set of survey questions for the zoning ordinance
3. Resume discussion of zoning ordinance definitions
4. Table showing the potential reduction of non-conformance based on acreage sizes in the AF zoning district

Unfinished Business

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals did not meet for its regular meeting in February and will not meet in March.

Police

By Liz Norris-Harr

We had a slight change in Interns for our program. Alec Olivier decided to further his career elsewhere. We did, however, hire Tyler Harvala. Tyler currently works for MCSO at the jail. Tyler and Mason have been learning the ropes with the police department as well as attending fire training weekly. We are excited for them to start the academy.

The officers were excited to finally get a nice snowfall late this month so they could get out on the snowmobile for patrol. They were even able to get the interns out for some snowmobile driving training.

Prescription Drug Collection

Prescription drug collection through the drop-off box at the Township Police Station.

Month 2019	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pounds To-Date	5.5	4										
Pounds Year To-Date	5.5	9.5										

FOIA

REQ #	Date Rec	Res by Date	Invoice Sent	48 Days Invoice	10 day Ext Sent	10 day Ext	Response Date	Link to Documentation	Description
23-1	2/6/2023	2/10/2023					2/7/2023	23-1 Glendon	Police Reports
23-2	2/15/2023	2/21/2023					2/15/2023	23-2 Dankin	Police Reports
23-3	2/24/2023	3/3/2023					2/28/2023	23-3 Skyline Lein Search 03.03.23	Property Information



Web Page Statistics

Year to date totals through February are shown in the table.

Month	Unique Visits	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth (GB)
January	2,121	4,153	16,070	30,207	7.85
February	1,927	3,923	21,825	33,723	20.19
Totals	4,093	8,191	38,342	64,816	34.87
Averages	1,927	3,923	21,825	33,723	20.19

Highest hits per day in February for the Township web site occurred on Monday and the highest peak usage time was 10 PM to 11 PM.

Downloads

There were 866 downloaded documents in February. The top ten documents downloaded were:

Page	Number of Downloads
2023 meeting dates	112
Township Board agenda materials – 02.13.23	110
2023 notification dates	108
Township Board minutes – 12.12.22	80
Township Board minutes – 10.10.22	77
Township Board minutes – 11.14.22	76
Township Board agenda materials – 01.09.23	69
FOIA request	57
DPW Technician job description	55
Township Board combined minutes – 2014	52



Page Visits

Top ten pages visited in February were:

Top ten pages visited in July were: Page	Number of Views
Employment	944
Directory email	712
Contacts	543
Public Works	530
Agendas and Minutes – Planning Commission	499
Forms	498
Information and Newsletters	495
Assessor	456
Police	455
Agendas and Minutes – Board of Review	430

Zoning Permit Counts

Zoning permit counts through February, 2023:

2023 Reviewed Permits by Month		2023 Reviewed Permits by Type		
Month	Number of Permits	Permit Type	Approved Number	Denied Number
January	0	Addition	0	0
February	0	Alteration	0	0
		Commercial Outbuilding	0	0
		Conditional Use	0	0
		Deck	0	0
		Fence	0	0
		Garage	0	0
		Grading	0	0
		Home	0	0
		Home / Garage	0	0
		Home Occupation	0	0
		New Commercial	0	0
		Outbuilding	0	0
		Pole Building	0	0



2023 Reviewed Permits by Month		2023 Reviewed Permits by Type		
			Approved	Denied
		Rezoning Application	0	0
		Sign	0	0
		Site Plan Review	0	0
		Zoning Variance Request	0	0
Total	0	Total	0	0

