

SOMERSET TOWNSHIP

HILLSDALE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

July 2014

Bits and Pieces

By Township Supervisor Don Figiel

The winter of 2013/2014 will be remembered for the extreme cold temperatures and heavy snow falls and the effect of these weather conditions on our roads. The county will be playing catchup for a while trying to bring our roads back into reasonable condition. The state legislature has been deciding how to raise the estimated 1.2 billion or more needed to fix our roads statewide. Just a bit of history on road funding in Michigan, prior to 1931 property tax paid for road repair. In 1931 the Michigan Legislature passed P.A. 130 of 1931 which ceded local road control to the county road commissions and provided a new funding source. In 1951, P. A. 51 was enacted by the Legislature made additional changes to road funding in Michigan. There are questions that should be addressed now on funding. How will the money be distributed? Will Public Act 51 be the method of distribution? Act 51 retains the county road commissions' sole control of primary and local roads in counties outside of city and village streets. Somerset Township has 97.41 miles of roads split between asphalt and gravel, of which 14.09 miles are Primary County Road System and 83.32 miles are Local Road System. All county road commissions in Michigan do not have the same policy regarding road repair. Hillsdale County's local road policy is as follows: 1) Hot mix asphalt paving township pays 100% of contractor work & materials; 2) Reconstruction of paved or gravel roads township pays 70%; 3) Paver patch/Seal coat township pays 70% if fog seal is used it is extra; 4) Gravel patching using Limestone township pays 100 % for material 5) Brining roads with single application of 3,000 gallons per mile county will reimburse to township \$100. Per mile applied, usual total cost is \$16,770. We are reimbursed \$4300. The township road millage generates \$46,992 and the general fund will transfer an additional \$29,648 and various other revenues will total \$81,150 for the fiscal year 2014/2015. This year (2013-2014) we will be spending all of our road millage, road fund balance, \$20,000 transfer from general fund and an additional \$25,000 from the general fund to cover this year road repairs. The township voted road millage intent was to supplement road improvements not underwrite them. The township board will continue to explore all additional road funding methods available.

Township Board meetings are the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM in the community room. We promptly start at 7:00 PM and try to keep the meetings moving. We have public comment at the beginning and end of each meeting. I can be reached at the township office 517-688-9223 ext. 219 or by Email supervisor@somerset township.org. Have a great summer.

Assessing Office

James Bradley, Somerset Township Assessor

Hours: Monday 9 to 12 and 1 to 5

Tuesday & Wednesday 9 to 12 noon

Are you recently a permanent resident of Somerset Township? If so, be sure to file your Homeowners Principle Residence Exemption form timely. This will make a significant savings on your property taxes. Forms for Homeowners Principal Residence Exemptions and Property Transfer Affidavits are also available through links on the bottom of the Assessors web page.

The Assessing Department will be updating property record cards throughout the township during the 2014 summer and fall season as part of the standard Assessing Administration process mandated by the State of Michigan. These visits will not necessarily increase your tax bill unless new structures/additions are discovered; usually caused by not obtaining proper permits. Some structures/additions may not require permits, but may still add value to your property, therefore requiring this update process for the township to remain in compliance with State Tax Commission guidelines.

If you are in need of dividing or combining properties, contact Assessor Jim Bradley at (517) 688-9223 ext. 216.

Parks and Recreation Committee

The committee has been busy this winter. The Berm House heating system has been replaced and is now up and running. Rewiring of the building is approximately half completed. One of the tennis courts is scheduled to be resurfaced this summer. The resurfacing will take a couple weeks, once it is underway. Several picnic tables are scheduled to be repaired and several new grills will be added to replace rusted out units. The ball diamonds are in good shape and are being used regularly.

The park continues to be a popular place for weddings, reunions, and graduation, birthday and retirement parties. We have a number of events planned for this summer. If interested in reserving the park for your event, please contact the Township Clerk's office (517-688-9223).

The "Longest Yard Sale" will be August 8th thru 10th, 2014. Last year we had lots in the triangle portion of the park (corner of US 12 and S. Jackson Rd.) available for rent. If you are interested in participating in the yard sale this year there will be 10' x 20' lots available for \$20 (for weekend). You will be able to set up starting Thursday August 7th after 6:00 PM. If you are interested in more information, contact Barb, the Township Librarian, at 688-9223.

Our resident ghost in the Berm House hopes you have a happy and safe summer. She hopes to "see" you soon.

Clerk's Corner:

Deborah Spicer, Clerk
Janet Binder, Deputy Clerk

2014 is Gubernatorial Election year. There will be 2 Elections. Tuesday, August 5th is the Primary and Tuesday, November 4th is the General Election. Please mark your calendars but I'm sure there will be enough reminders between the commercials and mail you will be receiving. For those of you who are on the Clerk's office permanent list for Absentee Voting, you should have already received your dual applications. If you haven't, please contact the clerk office and we will be happy to send out another. For those of you wishing to vote Absentee, you can do so by other contacting the Clerk's office and we will mail you out an application or you can come in during Clerk hours and we will be happy to assist you.

As always, we are always looking for Election Inspectors. This year is a certification year and that training/certification will be at the end of July. So if you're interested in becoming an Election Inspector, please contact the Clerk's office and we will get you signed up for training and certification.

Police Department

Chief

Eric Stolberg

Jay Niles has joined the Somerset Township Police as a part-timer officer. Our police officers will be at the 4th of July Fireworks Celebration on Friday, July 4th at McCourtie Park.

Summertime brings more daylight hours and extra activities especially around the lakes. Please be respectful of others with noise, parking and obeying speed limits and stop signs. Children and adults are on bicycles, walking, running and playing ball. Be alert when children are present as there's always the chance a youngster will run into the roadway chasing a runaway ball. Freddie's Freeze is open with pedestrians crossing US-12. Passing on the right, including through an intersection is illegal and dangerous and especially to those pedestrians at this intersection. STPD does issue tickets for passing on the right.

Keeping our Township clean and inviting falls on each of us. Eliminate littering along the roadways, keeping our lawns mowed and trash recycled or taken to landfills.

Somerset Township residents are warm and friendly and the township is a great place to call home. The police department is working to keep our resident's safe 24/7. Help us by not offering temptations for others to commit unlawful activities, such as larcenies. Keep your home, vehicles and outside buildings locked. Any questions or concerns will be addressed by us as well as any solutions to problems that you feel are ongoing.

Lastly, a continuing complaint is matters concerning dogs. Dogs are to be licensed and always under your control. A dog that is not on the owner's property and running free is considered "a dog at large". Dog owners are responsible for the actions of their dogs.

Call 911 to reach a police officer. Dispatch has direct contact at all times with Hillsdale County officers (full time) and Somerset Township officers (part-time).

Library

Barb Nemeth

Greetings from the Somerset Township Library!

Summer vacation for many across the county means going to the beach, hanging out with friends, and sleeping in. I hope it also means readers of all ages are catching up on their favorite books. Reading in all seasons supports a lifelong "Love to Read" habit. Please encourage your family to read over the summer. The library is open 9:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 - 5:00, Monday through Thursday, and 9:00 – 12:00 on Fridays. Stop in and borrow some Books, Audio CDs or Magazines soon.

We are accepting Book Donations for the upcoming Book Sale. Because of limited space books must have a copyright no older than the year 2000 and be in good, clean condition. Should you have any questions please contact the Library at 688-9223. Watch The Marque For Our Upcoming Summer Book Sale Date. Summer Books - They make the words go round! :) Barb

Treasury Department

Pamela Esterline Beck, Treasurer
Brenda Paul, Deputy Treasurer
Hours: Monday *and* Thursday
9am-5pm

Please read the 'MESSAGE TO TAXPAYER' in the upper left corner of tax notice!

The 2014 Summer Tax Due Date of September 14th falls on a Sunday this year; therefore the law provides for extension to the next business day. Payments must reach my office by 5:00 pm by Monday, September 15, 2013 to avoid applied interest. Postmarks are not accepted as payment date. Receipts mailed only with written request. Tax Notices will be mailed the to the last known address on record. Taxpayers must keep the township updated on name/address changes and/or corrections. Failure to receive a notice does not negate the responsibility for payment.

FOR ADDITIONAL TREASURY INFORMATION,
VISIT WWW.SOMERSETTOWNSHIP.ORG.

Fire & Rescue

Scott A. Friess
Fire Chief/EMT

Fred Newton Jr.
Asst. Chief/EMT

Our new ambulance has arrived and is being used. A little note with the Fourth of July coming up just to remind everyone that since fireworks are now legal, remember to be safe in the use of fireworks. The support the residents have shown to the Somerset Twp. Fire Dept. in the past is heartwarming and greatly appreciated by our firefighters. Your letters, phone calls, or that small plate of cookies let us know your fire department personnel are excelling in customer service, which is what our goal is on every response regardless day or night. We would like to thank everyone that has donated to our fundraisers that we put on, every little bit helps and is greatly appreciated.