

SUPERVISOR

Supervisor: Tim Shaw

supervisor@somersettownship.org

Phone: 517-688-9223

With 2024 coming to a close, we will see changes in the faces here at the Township. As some may know, Mike Bohnet our Township Clerk and Sharon Grech our Treasurer, did not seek re-election and we will have new people (somewhat) in those positions. I am confident that the offices will continue to provide the service without losing a step, as the Deputies in both offices stepped up to fill those positions and have already hired quality individuals as their Deputies.

I would like to give a shout out to Mike Bohnet and Sharon Grech for the work they have done for the Township, and all should know these 2 left their perspective offices better than they found them. Wish them the best and enjoy their (final?) retirement. If you happen to see either of these two, please let them know it was a job well done.

The Township needs a new Zoning Administrator as Richard LaRowe had to step out and will not be returning. Anyone interested please contact me ASAP and we can discuss what is involved in that position.

We were able to finally finish the addition to the Township for the bays on the fire station and did complete it under the \$200,000 budget set by the Board. With the addition we can keep all Township vehicles inside and hope to have enough room so all voters will be able to be under roof when waiting to vote.

We have hired 3 new full-time Paramedic/Firefighters, that will give me some relief so I will not have to cover the open shifts and ensure that we have full staff to respond when an emergency does happen. We were also able to fill the opening in the Police Department and are now back to full staff in that department.

The Road Commission was able to complete some road projects for the Township this year. As we all know there is a lot more to be done and the cost of these projects has increased dramatically over the past few years. With only collecting ¼ mill (approx. \$60,000) for roads, this does not go too far. I get calls on road repairs quite often and wished I had a better answer, but the money isn't there to cover many more road repairs.

The Fire and Police Departments continue to provide quality service to the residents that we can all be proud of and rest assured we are getting the protection they provide. Thank you!

Again, I extend the offer to contact any Township Board member if you have suggestions or would like to help the Township in any way.

May we all have a very happy Thanksgiving, and a wonderful Christmas to finish out the year. I look forward to a fantastic 2025.

Thank you for your continued support,
Tim Shaw Supervisor
Township of Somerset

CLERK'S CORNER

Clerk: Sharon Uyttenhove

Deputy Clerk: Barb Vozenilek

Hours: Monday 9AM – 4PM

Wednesday 12PM – 4PM

Thursday 9AM - 12PM

First of all, I would like to thank my co-workers and residents of Somerset Township for allowing me to serve as Clerk for the past 8 years. I will be replaced by my Deputy Clerk, Sharon Uyttenhove effective November 21, 2024. I wish her and her new Deputy Clerk Barbara Vozenilek the very best going forward as our Township continues to grow in population and assessed value.

During my 8 years of service, we have been fiscally responsible by not exceeding the amended budget during any fiscal year. I am also proud to have been the Somerset Board of Trustees representative to the Jerome Community Building Committee. JCB has WIFI, a generator, new floors and many other improvements.

Elections have changed over the past 8 years with anyone registered to vote being able to get an absentee ballot for any reason, and the addition of early voting at the Hillsdale County Court House 9 days before election day. Our Election Inspector team worked hard to ensure that Somerset Township has accurate and secure elections for our over 4,000 registered voters. Regarding the 5 Cemeteries, our perpetual care has been elevated by our Sextons and our mowing contractors.

There is not enough space in this article to express my appreciation for the services provided by Somerset Township. Working with the Police, Fire, Road Commission, Parks Committee, Library, JCB, Zoning Administrator, Assessor, Treasurer, Trustees and Supervisors has enabled me to do my job in a more efficient manner. I will miss all of you.

Best personal Regards, Michael Charles Bohnet

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

Treasurer: Jan O'Shaughnessey

Deputy Treasurer: Lesley Weidner

Hours: Monday 9AM – 12PM & 1PM – 4PM

Thursday 9AM – 12PM & 1PM – 4PM

Tax Bills

Payment for the 2024 Winter Tax Bills will be due by Friday, February 14, 2025. The last day for Somerset Township to collect 2024 property taxes, before they are turned over to Hillsdale County as delinquent, is February 28, 2025. After February 28, 2025, Delinquent Tax Bills must be paid to the Hillsdale County Treasurer. The Treasurer's Office will be open on Friday, February 28, 2025 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm for the last day of tax collection. A drop slot is available during regular Township office hours and is located inside the Township building under the Treasurer's window. If you would like a receipt for your mailed tax payment, you must include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Taxpayers must keep the Township updated on Name/Address changes and/or corrections. Failure to receive a Tax Bill does not negate the responsibility for payment. Taxes may be paid in person at the Township, or online by credit card at Somersettownship.org -->Services Tab --> Pay Tax Bill

Dog Licenses

Dog Licenses will be available at the Somerset Township Treasurer Office December 1, 2024 through February 28, 2025. You must reside within Somerset Township and provide current rabies vaccination certificate. Dog Licenses must be purchased separate from your tax bill.

Drain Assessments

Drain Assessments are special fees landowners and municipalities in a drainage district are legally obligated to pay to cover the cost of maintaining, improving or establishing a designated county drainage system.

Properties located in a Drainage District, are noted on your tax bill as one of the following: Brown #217, Fisk #140, Lake Somerset, Lake LeAnn.

For additional Treasury information, please visit www.somersettownship.org.

ASSESSING OFFICE

Assessor: Anthony Stockdale/MAAO

Deputy Assessor: Cathy Burke

Hours: Monday and Thursday

9AM – 12PM & 1PM – 3PM

Fall 2024 has been a busy and productive few months for the assessing department. The Building Department has kept us very busy with new permits. As the end of the year approaches, the Assessing Department would like to remind all residents that have had building permit(s) pulled that the Assessing Department will be conducting inspections to determine the project's completion as of December 31st (Tax Day for Michigan Assessors). All assessing staff will be in marked cars and identify themselves before doing any field inspections. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Anthony Stockdale in the Assessing Department via phone 517-688-9223 or via email at assessor@somersettownship.org.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief of Police: John Gessner

Officers: Chris McCann and Keegan McKenna

Season Greetings! I hope this finds everyone having a wonderful time planning for a Great Holiday with family and friends and looking forward to the new year.

As I reflect on the year 2024, I am pleased to inform our residents that the department is once again back to its original staffing level from two years ago. The department was able to hire and sponsor Officer Keegan McKenna to the Washtenaw Police Academy where he completed his training and graduated on September 6th of this year. This is a milestone for the department as the department and township have not sponsored an officer to a police academy since the beginning of the department in 1977. Officer McKenna is a local resident with ties to the township. As of this letter he is currently conducting

department training to allow him to be successful for the department and the township. If you see him or have an interaction with him, hopefully a good one (LOL), please welcome him to the township. Further the department is continuing to update its equipment, vehicles and training to better provide for the township residents.

Again, with this time of year and hunting season on us, remember to use caution as our four-legged friends are on the move. If you see one, plan on two being there. If you are involved in a vehicle crash, just contact 911. Also with that being said, remember that with the winter months come possibly dangerous road conditions due to snow and ice. **PLEASE REMEMBER TO SLOW DOWN AND LEAVE EARLY IF YOU NEED TO SO AS TO PREVENT A VEHICLE CRASH.**

Also, as a reminder, if you are planning on leaving the township for vacation, winter get-away or even a short trip, you can contact the township librarian, Ms. Kim Bedard and request your property to be checked on by the department in your absence. Just stop into the township hall and fill out the property inspection form, make sure to note your department date and return date, and contact information for a person that can be contacted in your absence just in case we find an issue with your home while you are away.

Last thing is contacting the Police Department. Please remember that in order to contact the Somerset Twp Police Department if it is an emergency call **911**. If it is a non-emergency do not contact the department office as it is normally not manned, as the on-duty officer is normally on patrol and may not get you message for several hours. So for non-emergency calls, please contact the **HILLSDALE COUNTY CENTRAL DISPATCH NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER 517-439-9913**. The dispatcher will take your information and contact the on-duty officer and have the officer contact you to handle your complaint. If you only have information to give to the department, you can contact the department office at **517-688-9223 ext -312** and leave the information.

From the Staff at the Somerset Township Police Department, Have a safe and wonderful Holiday Season,
Chief John Gessner

SOMERSET TOWNSHIP

FIRE & EMS

Fire Chief/EMT: Scott A. Friess
Asst. Chief/EMT: Richard W Sleeman Jr.

A little reminder if you happen to get transported by our ambulance and receive a bill, don't panic and please give the Chief a call as you pay a mileage and do not owe anything that your insurance does not cover. We have 3 full-time Paramedics on staff now to better serve the residents of Somerset Township. On a final note, the support the residents have shown to the Somerset Twp. Fire Dept in the past is heartwarming and greatly appreciated by our Firefighters and we hope it will continue for years to come.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Chairperson: Dan Monahan
Co-Chairperson: Shaina Kulczykcki
Secretary: Lesley Weidner
Board Liaison: Jan O'Shaughnessey

As 2024 draws to a close, the Parks and Recreation Committee is thrilled to look back on an eventful and rewarding season at McCourtie Park. The past year was filled with various improvements, family-fun programs, and projects preserving both the natural and historical features that make this park such a beloved gathering place. Thank you to the community and the many dedicated volunteers for their continued support! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Somerset Township (517) 688-9223.

This year brought back popular events such as Music in the Park, Fourth of July Fireworks, and the US-12 Garage Sale. McCourtie Park also hosted several new events like Earth Day, Autumn Fest, and a Disc Golf Tournament. The Committee is excited to expand the program list and offer more opportunities to serve the community with their recreation and entertainment needs. The 2025 McCourtie Park calendar of events will be posted in January on the Somerset Township website and facebook page: www.facebook.com/mccourtiepark

If you visited McCourtie Park this past year, you may have noticed new features such as the pathway lighting, providing a safer walking path as you enter the park. Five trees were also planted to enhance the disc golf course and volunteers worked hard all season long maintaining

garden beds, clearing trails, and keeping the park clean. All seventeen bridges were assessed for repairs, and restorations on Bridge #10 and cement walls were completed this Fall. Bridge repairs will continue next Spring.

The Committee was also excited to open the historic Rathskeller building for visitor hours and offered guided tours to showcase its unique architecture and rich history. The Rathskeller will continue to remain open on Fridays 10am-4pm, and we look forward to expanding those visitor hours next season. This year also provided the opportunity to use the Rathskeller for Township programming, allowing the Committee to better prepare the space for future rentals. Rathskeller rental information will be made available in January 2025, and questions can be directed to coordinator@somersettownship.org.

We would love to hear from you! Park and Recreation meetings are held at the Township Hall on the first Monday of each month at 4pm. If you're interested in volunteering or becoming a committee member, please contact Somerset Township at (517) 688-9223 or attend a future Parks and Recreation Committee meeting. We hope to see you at the park soon!

LIBRARY

Librarian: Kimberly Bedard
Hours: Monday - Thursday 9AM – 4PM
Friday 9AM – 12PM

WOW 2024 flew by. We are continuing to get new books in. I put in a new book order when new releases become available. If there are any new requests for books, please let me know and I can look into ordering it to have available at our library.

I am asked daily if our library accepts book donations. I will gladly take any book donations that have a copyright date of at least 2020 and newer, as long as it isn't a book that is already here in our library.

There are several books that have been checked out and have not made it back to our library. I would love to see the books returned. If you have checked out books in the past and have forgotten to return them, there are a couple of options to get them returned. You can utilize the afterhours book drop at the front door of the Township offices or you can bring them into the library

when I am open. So, please take some time and look around to locate your library books.

Please keep in mind that the library is the **ONLY** office that is open 5 days a week. Other offices within the Township have their own hours, which you can find here on this newsletter or on the home page of our website at www.somersettownship.org. The hours are also posted at our front door.

I am also the Secretary for the Building and Zoning Departments. So, any applications for these departments can be picked up and dropped off to me. I also take care of the rentals for McCourtie Park (pavilion and bridges),

Somerset Township Hall and the Jerome Community Building. Please contact me for any information regarding those requests.

We still have quite a few audio books I would like to rehome. If anyone is interested, please feel free to stop in and look through them. You don't have to bring them back; they will be yours to keep. 😊

Books for Sale! I am always going through books and anything that hasn't been checked out in 7 to 10 years or more has been placed on our sale cart. Hard cover books are \$1.00, soft cover books \$0.75 and paperbacks \$0.50.

I am looking forward to another great year! Happy New Year!

JEROME COMMUNITY BUILDING

Jerome Community Building Committee
Chairperson: Delores Smith-Post
Greg Sheffer
Maggi McElroy
Melissa Machnee
Audean Sheffer

We have had another busy year with rentals. Our fundraiser we had in September was quite successful. The next fundraisers will be April 12th and December 6th, 2025. We have 32 spaces to rent inside and in April we will also have spaces outside to rent, weather permitting. There will be crafts of all kinds, baked goods, freeze dried candies and fruit, vintage items and a farmer's market. We have a room downstairs filled with donated items and are still expecting good used merchandise. The rental cost is \$20.00 per space. All proceeds go back into the Jerome Community Building.