



3848 VETERANS DRIVE / TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49684
 (231) 941-1620 / FAX: (231) 941-1588
www.garfield-twp.com ~ updated frequently!

SPRING 2021

Garfield

Charter Township

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

TOWNSHIP HOURS

Monday—Thursday
 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
CLOSED FRIDAYS

HOLIDAY HOURS

Township offices will be closed for the observance of the following holidays:
 Presidents' Day — Feb. 15th
 Memorial Day — May 31st



ELECTED OFFICIALS

CHUCK KORN.....SUPERVISOR
 JEANE BLOOD LAW.....TREASURER
 LANIE McMANUSCLERK
 MOLLY AGOSTINELLI..... TRUSTEE
 CHRIS BARSHEFF..... TRUSTEE
 STEVE DUELL..... TRUSTEE
 DENISE SCHMUCKAL TRUSTEE

STAFF

HILARY ALPERSAPPRaiser
 JUSTIN BIGBEEAPPRaiser
 AMY L DeHAAN ASSESSOR
 RICH DERKS..... BUILDING INSPECTOR
 MICHAEL GREEN ...ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
 STEVE HANNON...DEPUTY PLANNING DIRECTOR
 KAREN LEAVER..... ADMIN ASSISTANT
 CHLOE MACOMBER.... DEPUTY TREASURER
 DEREK MORTON..... CODE ENFORCEMENT
 DEREK MORTON..... PARKS STEWARD
 BILL MOUSER..... FACILITIES MANAGER
 KATHLEEN ROON OFFICE COORDINATOR
 AMY SIMON....BUILDING & LAND USE ASST.
 CARL STUdzINSKIBUILDING OFFICIAL
 JOHN SYCH.....PLANNING DIRECTOR
 BETTY TEZAK..... DEPUTY CLERK

OUR MISSION

As neighbors, we work together to create a community where our residents and businesses thrive, our natural resources are protected and enjoyed, our visitors are welcomed and appreciated, and our high quality of life is promoted.

DO YOU WANT TO INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Buying local could be one of the best decisions you can make. Shopping with local vendors, small businesses, farmer's markets, and other local businesses is an investment in the future growth, health, safety, and welfare of your community. Because of the lockdowns we are seeing small businesses disappear, leaving limited ability for us as consumers to have a selection of products and services to choose from. While big box stores have their purpose, they often come and go as times changes in the way we purchase our items. Buying online is also very popular to access a variety of items, but that too has its downfalls, such as trying on items or difficult returns.

Our local small businesses are truly the backbone of our community and they allow for more dollars to be spent and stay within our community. For every \$100 you spend locally \$68.00 will stay in your community. For every \$100 spent at a national chain only \$43 stays in the community and buying on the internet is much less. Our small businesses in Garfield Township have been enduring enormous challenges and could use our support in keeping them open.

As a Township we would like to maintain a healthy balance of our locally, independent owned businesses. So, the next time you are going to make a purchase please consider these businesses and buy USA goods to support the health of our nation.

- Statistics from Business Resources.



FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE

It is the time of year to file income tax returns. Are you missing your property tax information? Look up your info on our [website: www.garfield-twp.com](http://www.garfield-twp.com). Click on the green box that says "Click Here for Property Info".

If you still need to pay your 2020 property taxes, you can do that on the website too. Tax payments will be accepted at the Township until Monday, March 1, 2021. Post-marks are not accepted for this deadline. After this date, all real property taxes still owed will be sent to the Grand Traverse County Treasurer and will need to be paid at their office on Boardman Ave.

Our website is available to provide you with tax info 24 hours a day, conveniently from the comfort of your home. Your first time accessing your information, you will need to create a username and password.

Please let us know if we can assist you in any way.

FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Property owners are encouraged to stop in and review their property records regularly, which may reduce the need for a valuation appeal before the Township's Board of Review. Assessing staff can help ensure that the records are accurate. If something is incorrect, those items can be corrected to reflect what is actually on the property. Nearly 6,900 properties are valued annually - it is impossible to visit them all each year and to be 100% accurate, so it is important that taxpayers help.

Michigan's property tax system was instituted early in our history and provides funding for education and local government as well as police and fire protection. The system relies on the determination of Fair Market Value. In order to maintain the system's integrity, routine property visits are necessary and are made by the three agencies charged with maintaining the property tax system.

The Local Assessor determines the value of each parcel annually. To accomplish this, a mass appraisal system (based on a construction cost manual, modified by similar, sold properties) is used. The costs used to value buildings require exterior measurements of the buildings, and relies on property visits to accurately catalog the property's land and building attributes (record card review).



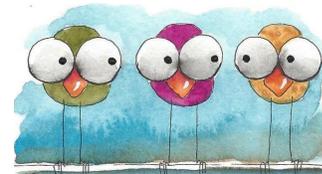
The County Equalization Department (CED) determines proper overall assessment levels for each unit in each property class

within the county. Equalization studies are used to make these determinations, and also require property visits of sold properties and/or appraisals on random samples selected each year. Value conclusions are made using the same cost manual and procedures that Assessors are required to use.

The State Tax Commission (STC) through the Property Services Division (PSD) monitors both the Assessor and CED throughout the annual assessment cycle. PSD staff may make random property visits in the monitoring process, which leads to the STC determination of State Equalized Value (SEV). Value conclusions are made using the same cost manual and procedures used by Assessors and CED.

These routine property visits depend on property owner participation. The property tax system relies on a three-tiered check-and-balance process that requires these visits to maintain its integrity. As a property owner, you may choose whether to participate. Simply write or email us stating your request. We hope you will participate because accurately cataloging a property's land and building attributes for the record is beneficial to the property owner and essential to the property tax system.

If you have questions about your property record, valuation or anything else assessing related, please do not hesitate to stop in or call us.



IS YOUR SMALL BUSINESS TAX EXEMPT?

As a small business owner, you can legally pay **No Personal Property taxes!** And, avoid the hassle of completing annual Personal Property statements!

If your eligible small business paid Personal Property taxes in 2020, simply fill out Form 5076 COMPLETELY, sign it AND file it with the Assessor (postmarked) by February 22, 2021 to become EXEMPT!

Does your business have personal property worth less than \$80,000 (true cash value)? You may qualify to file Form 5076 - Small Business Property Tax Exemption Claim Under MCL 211.9o. And, if Form 5076 was filed for 2020, and the exemption was granted, it will continue until the taxpayer no longer qualifies. **No more Personal Property statements of any kind!**

If the business makes purchases of equipment that puts them over the \$80,000 threshold, taxpayers are required to file Rescission Form 5618 indicating they no longer qualify for the exemption AND a personal property statement (Form L-4175) no later than February 20th of the year the property is no longer eligible.

Failure to file Form 5618 will result in significant penalty and interest.

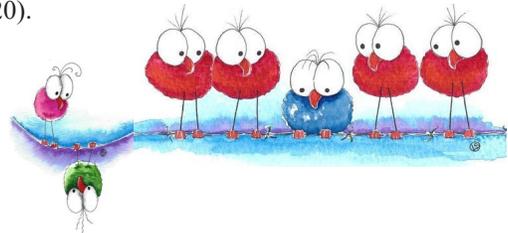
Taxpayers are reminded that they must be able to provide evidence to support their exemption at the request of the Assessor. Assessors may audit the personal property records of businesses within their jurisdiction. It is important (and required by MCL 211.22) that taxpayers keep accurate personal property records.

Personal property forms are available in the Assessor's Office or on-line at:

www.garfield-twp.com/personalproperty.asp OR

https://www.michigan.gov/taxes/0,4676,7-238-43535_72736---,00.html

Questions about this or any other personal property reporting requirements are encouraged to call the Assessors Office at (231-941-1620).



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER FOR SPRING

Feb 14th – Winter Tax Due Date (last day to pay without interest/penalty is Feb 16th).

Feb 22th – Personal Property Statements or Small Business Exemption forms due for business owners.

March 1st – Last day to pay Real Property Taxes before transferring unpaid balances to County Treasurer.

March 2nd – March Board of Review meets (if you think your property value is too high, contact the assessing office at 231-941-1620 before this date).

March 8th – Organizational Meeting

March 10th – Board of Review Appeals.

FROM THE PLANNING OFFICE

Township to improve development services



Nationwide retail trends and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are being felt in the Township. How we respond as a community will determine our success for the future. To be vibrant and competitive, our community must be better prepared for development and provide opportunity for future investment. Recently, the Township engaged in Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC), a no-cost, technical assistance, statewide certification program offered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). RRC certified communities attract and retain businesses, offer superior customer service and have a streamlined development approval process making pertinent information available around-the clock for anyone to view.

Utilizing a set of best practices, Planning Department staff, along with the Planning Commission and Township Board, will work to integrate transparency, predictability and efficiency into daily development practices. RRC efforts being planned for 2021 include improved implementation of the Township Master Plan, easier to access online applications, creation of a process guidebook for developers, project tracking software, and a management program to help identify and plan Township infrastructure improvements.

Another key goal for 2021 is creation of a public participation plan. The plan will be an important tool to communicate with residents and business owners and track and convey the outcomes of community discussions on important issues. The plan will be used for upcoming public engagement efforts, including the Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Plan which will need to be updated within the next few years.

Through these and other actions, the Township will obtain RRC certification. Once certified, technical assistance will be provided from MEDC, including promoting and marketing redevelopment in the Township.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Garfield Township is preparing to develop another one of our parks, River East, which is located on the west side of Keystone Road, north of Hammond Road.

The township is trying to promote outdoor activities, and much like the Silver Lake Recreation Area, we will be including a playground area, walking loop, and dog park.

The initial phase will start this spring.



Location map at right.



SILVER LAKE RESERVATIONS

It's not too early to book your park reservations for 2021. Applications can be downloaded from our website or picked up from the reception desk at the Township Hall. Remember that reservations work on a first come, first serve basis. A deposit is required to reserve the date. You have several covered pavilions to choose from as well as reserving our multi-purpose field.

MAKE SURE TO SAVE YOUR DATE!

SPRING BRUSH PASS

The Brush Drop-Off for Spring will be starting on Saturday, April 10th, 2021 at the Keystone Brush Drop-Off Site located at 2471 N. Keystone Road in Traverse City.

Please stop in our township office to ask for your spring brush pass which will have the days and hours listed.

FROM THE ZONING OFFICE

We would like to remind residents and businesses that the Garfield Township Noise Ordinance (**Ordinance #47**) prohibits the operation of many types of heavy equipment and vehicles that generate loud noise, such as snow removal equipment, garbage trucks, construction vehicles and equipment, and similar uses, from operating between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am. Police, fire, ambulance, Road Commission, and other public service or emergency vehicles, are exempt from the Ordinance. Snow removal operations between 10 pm and 6 am are allowed during a declared “snow emergency”. Please contact the Zoning Dept. at (231) 941-1620 x 230 if you have any questions pertaining to the Noise Ordinance. Most of our township ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance, can be found on our website at <http://www.garfield-twp.com/ordinances.asp>.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

2020 was certainly a year of change on many levels. What didn't change was construction activity. Surprisingly, despite a pandemic and a state lockdown, construction remained steady and resilient throughout the year in Garfield Township, and concluded with a total construction value of approximately \$33 million.

During 2020, the building department reviewed, processed and issued 231 permits, while performing over 950 inspections.

Despite the fact that construction investment in Garfield Township should remain strong in 2021, we cannot predict where the economy is headed, or offer any future projections. However, based on knowledge of some of the potential projects planned for the Township, we are quite confident that construction activity may exceed 2020 numbers.

If you have any questions, feel free to stop in the office anytime. As always, we have numerous guides to help with any project that you may have.



METRO - 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 proved to be a challenging year for the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department, as it did for everyone. Our year began as normal and soon turned difficult with the Covid outbreak as we worked to find solutions to keep our employees safe from contracting Covid while responding to emergencies and Covid positive patients. We faced PPE shortages and a lack of information to develop proven policies. All non-essential administration and fire prevention staff were sent home or reassigned as inspections/public education appearances were suspended. During the spring stay-at-home order, medical calls were down significantly while fires in residential occupancies were up over a normal year. This can be attributed to a fear of being in the hospital setting and more people at home doing projects and cooking.

Once the stay-at-home was lifted, our medical calls increased beyond normal levels. Our tourist industry was very busy which led to an increase of water rescue related calls over normal years. Fall season saw another spike in cases including an outbreak within the department which led to staffing challenges.

Year-end numbers show we responded to 5,010 emergencies in 2020 which unfortunately is an all-time high.

We also developed on-line virtual public education programs and virtual inspection methods in order to keep our employees and community safe while still delivering our fire prevention messages.

2020 also saw the retirement of Executive Assistant/HR Director Marcia Schwind after 28 years of service. Thank you for your service and dedication, Marcia! Stacey Bird was hired to fill the position and had one week under her belt when Covid shutdowns hit and her role became vital to helping develop policies related to all new rules and laws. Welcome to the team Stacey.

We also experienced an outpouring of community support during 2020. From meals and treats delivered to our stations, to distilleries providing hand sanitizers and our local and national retailers prioritizing their deliveries to keep us stocked with cleaning products. We can't thank you enough for all your help and support.

2020 was certainly a challenge. We adapted and continued working everyday to protect our citizens and visitors. We thank you for your support and hope for a healthy, safe 2021.

Assistant Chief and Fire Marshal,
Brian Belcher



REGARDING SUMMER & WINTER TAXES:

As a courtesy to our residents, Garfield Township accepts postmarks for February 14th and September 14th (not obligated by law).

CAUTION:

Online bill payments often use bulk mailings that do not include a postmark. Payments received after these dates with **NO POSTMARK** will be considered late.

RECYCLE SMART HHW Event Dates for 2021

Thursday, April 15th

Thursday, May 13th

Thursday, June 17th

Thursday, August 12th

Saturday, September 18th

Thursday, October 14th

Visit recyclesmart.info/1162/Household-Hazardous-Waste

Sign-up will be available online approximately one month before each event.

Appointments are required.

The Township Board meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm.

The Planning Commission meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm.

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on an as needed basis on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:00 pm.

The Parks and Recreation Commission meets the 1st Monday of every other month at 6:00 p.m.

All meetings take place at the Garfield Township Hall unless stated otherwise on the agenda.