



NEWSLETTER

June 2023

12050 Old Belding Road Belding, MI 48809 616-691-8450
Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

TOWNSHIP BOARD	
Supervisor:	Frank Force
Clerk:	Michelle Alberts
Treasurer:	Sabrina Freeman
Trustee:	Dennis Heffron
Trustee:	Paul Knoerl

From the Township Board

Kent District Library has installed an Express Library in the Township Office Lobby. This new machine holds up to 200 books and allows patrons to check out books by scanning their library card or inputting their library account number. The machine automatically checks the book out when it's removed from the shelves and the patron simply shuts the door and takes their receipt. The lobby area is also equipped to sign up new card holders as well. The Township and KDL are excited about this partnership and bringing more services to residents. This service will be available during the Township's business hours.

The Township now has a Facebook page. It will include meeting notices and other articles that are posted on the Township website. The Board hopes this will increase communication of happenings in the Township. It can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/GrattanTownship>.

As encouraged in previous newsletters, all residents can subscribe to meeting agendas by visiting: <https://grattantownship.civicweb.net/Portal/Subscribe.aspx>. Once the agenda is published, an email will be sent with the information. The Board also sent a postcard notice in May notifying property owners of the Township survey and upcoming dates. We appreciate any feedback on this method of communication. The Board will be discussing the results of the survey at the July 10th, 2023 Board Meeting at 7pm.

The Board declined the purchase of the Grattan School Building in January of 2023; however, the owner offered the building as a donation to the Township shortly after. The Board discussed and accepted the donation of the Grattan School Building at the June 12, 2023 Board Meeting- with the intention to demolish the building. The projected cost to renovate the building was \$1.5 to \$1.9m which was deemed too costly to justify. A grant application was submitted in May for the funds to demolish the building and the Township should know in mid-July if the monies will be awarded. The survey made available in May will advise the Board in which direction the school property's use should go. Any information on this decision can be found by reading the Township Board Meeting Minutes (February-June 2023) and the Grattan School Resident Committee Meeting Minutes (Fall of 2022).

The Planning Commission is continuing its work on the adopted Solar Ordinance as this fast-growing industry sets its sites on properties in the Township. The ordinance that was adopted in May is available for viewing on the Township website.

Special thank you to Family, Friends, and Neighbors for organizing the Memorial Day activities- including Dianna Force and the volunteers from Boy Scout Troop #228. We appreciate all your hard work and dedication to this successful event.

From the desk of Supervisor Frank Force....

The Township Board has approved a fifth on-site generator to provide electricity to pump stations #2 and 3A, on Big Pine Island Lake, during power outages. Due to the long lead times, this generator will not be installed until late summer or early fall. The Board's goal is to provide stand-by power to all the major pump stations in the foreseeable future. This is made possible by the maintenance fee that sewer customers are paying on their bills. To avoid sewer overflows, water usage must be limited during power outages. While whole home generators have dramatically increased in the last ten years, be reminded that most of the pump stations serving your homes will continue to be without power.

From the desk of the Clerk Michelle Alberts...

2023 will be a quiet year for elections in the Township. Thankfully, this is giving our department time to prepare for 2024 and the implementation of Proposal 2 that passed in 2022. The main changes that will affect Grattan voters will be established early voting and the changes to absentee voting.

Established early voting: An early voting site will be required to be open for at least nine days prior to Election Day for at least eight hours every day during statewide and federal elections. This will operate just as it would at a polling location on Election Day, placing the ballot into the tabulator- not like absentee voting, where the ballot isn't tabulated until election day. Kent County will not be operating the early voting sites, local jurisdictions will remain responsible to coordinate these sites.

Allow voters to receive absentee ballots for all future elections through a single request: This change allows voters to submit a **single** request to receive an absentee ballot for **ALL** future elections. With this, voters who asked to automatically receive absentee ballots ahead of elections could later opt out. Ballots will not be sent if the voter does not vote for six straight years or if information is received suggesting the voter has moved. Previously, absentee voter applications had to be filled out for each election, but this allows voters to choose an automatic ballot.

Staffing & Election Dates: With the established early voting, our office will be looking for workers for the nine days of early voting as well as election day. If you are interested and available to work the Presidential Primary in February of 2024- please contact my office at Clerk@grattantownship.org for more information.

From the Zoning and Building Department...

As Summer commences and residents are out and about, enjoying their yards and the outdoors in Grattan Township, it is also a good time to remind folks that zoning, and nuisance ordinances may apply to some of this activity. Noise ordinance issues are one example that increase during the summer, particularly with late night partying on the lakes, or with early morning workouts on normally otherwise quiet streets. Immediate concerns regarding noise or nuisance issues can be directed to the Kent County Sheriff's Department, otherwise the Township's online complaint form can be submitted (with photos as well) for less urgent requests. In addition, the Township does not regulate locations of trash bins or grass height.

From the Zoning and Building Department continued...

Fence permits are free at the Township office and do require zoning approval, however, be reminded fence height is often limited on lakes and road rights-of-way. Additionally, fences often lead to boundary line disputes, so talk to your neighbors before deciding to put up a fence.

This is also the time when many are considering updating their decks, patios, and outdoor structures like gazebos and pergolas. These are all regulated in the zoning code and typically are not allowed within 30' of the water. Older non-conforming structures may exist and be maintained, but they cannot be altered, expanded, or improved without special approval from the planning commission. Please consult with the zoning department before beginning demolition.

Lastly, as you maintain your waterfront swim area, please be reminded all sand, dredging, and clearing of waterfront/wetland plants typically require permits from the State Department of Energy, Great Lakes, and the Environment. Additional Township regulations may also exist. The Township frequently receives complaints about these activities, dredging, and poor boating etiquette along docks and the waterfront. Be sure to brush up on your local boater guides and be sure your docks and beachfront are within Township requirements. More information on boater guides and regulations can be found on the Township website.

From Fire Chief Lou Kirkbride...

On behalf of the entire Grattan Township Fire Department, we would like to thank the community and area businesses for the donations that led to another successful Pancake Breakfast. Special recognition to the donors that make the breakfast possible, including Pickney Meats, Hilltop Sports, Johnsonville Meats, Herbruck's Chickery, Ric's Food Center, King's Well Drilling, Premier Auto, Boy Scout Troop #264 and Grattan Raceway. We hope to see you all again next year.

The Fire Department is seeking new recruits. Requirements include residency within the Township, ability to pass physical exam and availability to attend fall weekend classes. If you are interested, please contact Chief Lou at 616-485-5925.

As the dry season has continued, the Fire Department is continuing to recommend no burning as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has advised. Brush fires and unaccompanied bonfires are recreational fires and not recommended as the drought continues. Fireworks will be especially hazardous, please use common sense and safety measures if participating in all 4th of July activities.

Upcoming Important Dates...

Offices will be closed on 7/3 and 7/4 in observance of Independence Day.

Fall Clean-Up Day: Saturday, September 23rd from 8am- 3pm

**Township Board Meetings at 7:00pm-
July 10th, August 14th, September 11th, October 9th, November 13th**

From the Treasurer and Sewer Billing Department...

Dates to Remember:

2023 Sewer Quarterly Billing Due Dates:

July 31st- October 31st

July 1, 2023– 2023 Summer tax bills mailed.

September 14, 2023- 2023 Summer taxes due.

December 1, 2023– 2023 Winter tax bills mailed.

December 28, 2023 – Township Office will be open to collect taxes only from 9:00am – 5:00pm.

February 14, 2024 – 2023 Winter taxes due without interest or penalty

February 29, 2024 – Last day to pay 2023 Summer and Winter taxes at the Township before going to county. The treasurer’s office will be open from **9:00am - 5:00pm to collect taxes.**

2022 Tax Collection and Disbursements	Millage	Disbursed	Percentage
State Education Tax	6.0000	\$1,294,088.10	17.95%
Belding Area Schools (Operating and Other)	25.0000	\$982,950.97	13.64%
Lowell Area Schools (Operating, Debt and Bldg/Site)	25.0007	\$928,492.65	12.88%
Rockford Public Schools (Operating,Debt, Sinking Fund and P&R)	24.9910	\$279,125.62	3.87%
Kent Intermediate School District	5.4447	\$624,899.71	8.67%
Grand Rapids Community College	1.7085	\$196,084.32	2.72%
Ionia Intermediate School District	5.8136	\$575,719.07	7.99%
Kent County (Operating, Jail, Senior, Veterans, Zoo/Museum, Childhood Dev and Drains)	6.0971	\$1,310,028.18	18.17%
Kent District Library	1.2355	\$263,148.44	3.65%
Grattan Township (Operating and Administrative Fee)	0.6732	\$212,524.46	2.95%
Grattan Fire Dept (Operating and Equipment)	1.4686	\$312,787.33	4.34%
Big Crooked Lake Weed	Special Assessment	\$41,361.39	0.57%
Big Pine Island Weed	Special Assessment	\$42,420.57	0.59%
Cowan Lake Weed	Special Assessment	\$12,212.44	0.17%
Round Lake Weed	Special Assessment	\$6,516.20	0.09%
Cowan Lake Sewer	Special Assessment	\$77,492.24	1.08%
State of Michigan	Qualified Forest Program	595.50	0.01%
Sewer (delinquent)		\$47,460.95	0.66%
Total Taxes collected for summer and winter 2022		\$7,207,908.14	100.0%