



# **Annual Township Administrative Report**

**2017**

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Kalamazoo County, Michigan**

Presented to the Township Board February 5, 2018

## **CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMSTOCK ANNUAL TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

The Administrative Team handled many topics throughout 2017, some of which are being highlighted in this report.

- Board member meeting attendance stipend increased to encompass extra duties outside of the Township.
- Added Workshop meetings to the Board's schedule, which begin at 5:30 on the first Monday of the month, and changed the regular board meeting time back to 7:00 p.m.
- New election equipment received.
- Numerous meetings were held to discuss the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act. Joint meetings were also held with the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Commission to discuss whether or not to opt in or opt out of Medical Marijuana or to do nothing. Draft ordinances to regulate and police Medical Marijuana were drafted, however, the Board decided to Opt Out of the Medical Marijuana issue until the State completes its licensing requirements under LARA
- The Township contracted with Cobalt Community Survey to conduct a Township-wide citizen survey. This survey was done with Oshtemo and Texas Township also participating.
- The Township continues to offer "In-Kind" services to the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study. Planning & Zoning Administrator Stefforia and Treasurer Padgett provide these services, as needed, to satisfy our annual dollar commitment.
- Asset inventory, including Township-owned properties, weather sirens, sanitary sewer lift/pump stations, building, contents, and automobile coverages, was reviewed and updated.
- Superintendent Hess and Planning & Zoning Administrator Stefforia organized a Capital Improvement Committee to begin working on the Capital Improvement Plan. As a result of the committee, a formal presentation of the Township's first CIP was provided to the Board at the December 4, 2017 meeting. One of the CIP Committee's goals is to better plan for future expenses while demonstrating to the public how the excess funds will be used.
- Curbside pickup service was provided again in the spring and fall to our residents and is anticipated to continue in 2018.
- Representatives from the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office continue to attend meetings to update the Board on the patrols of the four deputies that cover the Township; two for the day shift and two for the night.

- The Board approved funding necessary updates to complete the Consumers Energy Small Business Energy Efficiency Program with the Fire & Rescue Department.
- Executive Director Mary Gustas of the Comstock Community Center presented a proposal for an adult day care center as well as a possible property purchase request of approximately 3.3 acres of land. This land is adjacent to the Community Center and currently owned by the Township.
- The Board received and approved the resignation of Trustee Art “Corky” Austin. David Camburn was appointed to fill Mr. Austin’s vacancy. Trustee Camburn’s appointment will continue into 2018 and he will then need to apply to run for reelection to complete the remaining two years on this term.
- Peter Haefner, Vredeveld Haefner, provided the Board with a summary of the financial statements and of the audit findings. As a result of the audit findings, a corrective action plan was recommended, and the Board followed up with an action plan.
- Approved new office hours; staying open until 6:00 pm on Wednesdays and closing at Noon on Fridays.
- Completed bringing in fiber optic cable to serve the township office.
- Purchased and installed a new HVAC unit at the township office.
- Approved soliciting proposals for the Comstock Center Design Study in conjunction with the Planning Commission as part of the Vision 2025 Master Plan.
- Township Board workshop and regular meeting schedules approved as well as observed holidays for 2018.
- One liquor license was approved for Soil Friends, a small wine maker, located at 1701 North 33<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- The Township budget line items went through a re-work to change general ledger numbers to comply with State requirement.
- Captain William Timmerman replaced Captain James VanDyken as Board liaison from the office the Kalamazoo County Sheriff after Captain VanDyken was promoted to Undersheriff
- The Board re-adopted the MTA Principles of Governance.
- Rearranged and consolidated Voter Precinct locations to eliminate split precincts.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

- Support of the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Proposition for 911 System Funding.
- Support of the City of Parchment to join the Kalamazoo Area Building Authority.

- Purchase Michigan Department of Transportation property at 5242 AZO Court.
- Authorize Clerk Mohney to submit grant application to the Secretary of State for new voting system.
- Support the Township Parks & Recreation funding and match and submittal of grant for improvements to Merrill Park.
- Opt-Out of PA 512 for Calendar Year 2018.
- Waiving Penalty Fees & Interest for Failure to File a Property Transfer Affidavit
- Truth In Taxation Hearing
- Permanently Divide, Rearrange, or Consolidate Precinct Locations

## **CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS**

- Approved entering into the Kalamazoo County Policy Protection Agreement for 2018
- Thompsons Hometown Lawn Care for mowing Cemeteries
- Cutting Edge for mowing contract for ordinance enforcement.
- Comcast Franchise Agreement was renewed.
- Watts Realty Team to list sale of 35<sup>th</sup> Street property (5-15-17)
- Abonmarche to provide ground Penetrating Radar
- Art Austin for improvements at the Transfer Station
- Best Way to service the Transfer Station Recycling Bins
- RW LaPine for purchase and installation of new HVAC unit
- Hi Tech for IT services
- CTS for fiber optic installation
- Mutual of Omaha for short term and long term disability
- Blue Cross Blue Shield for health insurance through Burnham & Flower agency
- EMC Insurance; General Liability, Auto, etc. through Ted Hartleb agency
- ADP for payroll processing for 3 years
- Financial Statement Preparation by Siegfried Crandall
- AT&T Franchise Agreement approved.
- Approved contract with Knight Watch to install cameras and monitor security alarms.

## **TRANSFER STATION**

- Continue accepting leaves and grass clippings collection at “no charge” to assist in avoiding residents burning them or finding areas to dump them.
- Punch cards were phased out as payment is now being accepted on site.
- Approved upgrades including tree removal, purchase of new ram, excavating, grading and placing millings along the back. In addition, extra

concrete pads were poured for placement of recycling bins and for placement of the new ram.

- Contracted with Best Way to empty the recycling bins.
- Arrangements made with KMR to empty metal recycling bins at no charge and split profit with Township 50/50.
- Changed hours of operation; approved keeping the Station open all year round and opened two (2) days a week, Thursdays and Saturdays. Previously the Station was also open on Tuesdays but was eliminated with staying open all year long.

## **SOFTWARE/HARDWARE**

- Purchased HR Component to existing BS&A Software that provides employee tracking, pension, reviews, etc.
- ADP was contracted for 3 years to process payroll.

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, POLICY ADDITIONS, AND UPDATES**

- Completely updated and combined handbooks with the Fire & Rescue Department.
- Change in current CTFD Promotional Policy regarding secondary employment to align with statute.
- Change in inclement weather policy adding that Fire Department will remain staffed.
- Approved policy regarding electronic tablet usage.
- Corrective action plan completed to correct budget item overages.
- Post-Audit Authorization adopted.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND HIRINGS**

- Approved hiring Paid On-Call Staff in the Fire Department (2/6)
- Appointed Clerk Mohny as FOIA Coordinator and Administrative Assistant Kurtz as alternate.
- Hired part-time Office Assistant
- Hired temporary assessing intern
- Approved stipend for the Deputy Clerk and Deputy Treasurer
- Increase in pay for lead maintenance staff member.
- Change in pay for fire chief position and entered into an employment agreement.
- Supervisor's compensation doubled and benefits approved.
- Promoted Assistant Fire Chief to Deputy Fire Chief
- Approved increasing position of Assistant in the Fire Department to full time

- Approved increasing position of Program Coordinator in the Parks & Recreation Department to full time
- New full time position created to assist with elections, social media as well as basic day to day functions.

## **GENERAL AND ZONING ORDINANCES**

- New comprehensive Lighting Ordinance
- Text amendment to detached accessory building setback requirements
- Noxious Weed and Uncontrolled Plant Growth Ordinance text amendment.
- Various ordinance text amendments
- Fire & Emergency Service Fee Ordinance No. 489 adopted on June 5, 2017
- Wireless Communications Facilities Text Amendments
- Amendments to fences and fees for permits requirement.

For more detailed information, see the 2017 Comstock Township Planning Commission Annual Report.

## **TOWNSHIP-LIBRARY BUILDING**

- Security cameras installed at the Township Office.
- The Township Library purchased an AED which was placed in a lock box in the Township Lobby.

## **CEMETERIES**

- Trees removed at the Comstock Cemetery.
- Metal detector that detects aluminum was purchased to aid in locating cemetery markers.
- Mowing bids sought.
- Expansion of Maple Grove Cemetery approved.
- Mapping using ground penetrating radar, by Abonmarche, approved to improve accuracy and efficiency with records in the Maple Grove Cemetery.

## **GRANTS**

- *SAW Grant:* Prein & Newhof, Township Engineering Consultant, completed its assessment of the \$611,000 SAW Grant, received through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. This grant completed its third year and final stage and the consulting firm will be presenting a detailed synopsis of their findings at the first Board meeting in 2018.

- The Parks & Recreation Board outlined an MDNR grant for handicap accessible fishing pier at Robert Morris Park which will be discussed further in 2018.
- The Parks & Recreation Department received an MDNR Trust Fund grant for improvements to Merrill Park.
- Even though the Township Administration did not receive a grant for its application submittal for a recycling infrastructure grant, the Board did decide to proceed with bringing recycling back to the Transfer Station and to do the needed upgrades.

### **COMSTOCK FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

In brief, here are a few highlights in the Fire & Rescue Department for 2017. The Department also prepares its own Annual report.

- Fire & Rescue 2016 Annual Report presented to the Township Board at the August 21, 2017 meeting.
- Loss of Township Fire Chief Ed Switalski in line of duty
- The 1997 Pierce Arrow Engine 933 was sold.
- A new IT Server was purchased for the Fire & Rescue Department.
- Appointment of Deputy Chief Beauchamp to Interim Chief then appointed Fire Chief.
- Purchase of new fire engine completed—honored Chief Switalski.
- Board approved action of removing nine (9) outdated weather sirens throughout the township.

A more comprehensive report from the Comstock Fire & Rescue Department will be submitted later on in 2018.

### **COMSTOCK PARKS & RECREATION**

- Received a \$400,000 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant for Merrill Park. The Grant requires a Township match of \$100,000. Both the Parks & Recreation Commission and Township Board approved the match funding.

A more comprehensive report from the Comstock Township Parks and Recreation will be received later on in 2018.

## **ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT**

The following is being provided to the Board for your information. Please contact me directly if you would like to discuss my report in further detail.

- Complaints:  
441 complaints were filed with the Comstock Ordinance Office for various ordinance and property issues.
- Notices/Warnings:  
254 notices and warnings were issued by the Comstock Ordinance Office for complaints that were not unfounded, or not immediately resolved.
- Citations:  
34 citations were issued by the Comstock Ordinance Office for warnings and notices that were not heeded.
- Court Proceedings:  
The Comstock Ordinance Officer attended, or was involved in, 46 court proceedings.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Roads**

- PAR Funds Committed. Road project bids came under budget and the Board approved completing adding another road project, East Main Homesites, rather than carry the funds over to the next year.
- South 33<sup>rd</sup> Street reconstruction was approved.

### **Water/Sewer**

- N Avenue Sewer Project-An agreement between Comstock Township, Pavilion Township, and Summit Polymers was drafted to extend sewer service to the manufacturing facility.
- Water service connection tap contract with Scott Taylor Excavating was amended to adjust to current pricing through March of 2018.
- Contracted with realtor to sell the Township's 35<sup>th</sup> Street parcel, north of I-94.
- Brookview sewer lead was extended to provide service to two homes west of the post office.
- Approved installation of new water service at Comstock Cemetery.

### **Street Lighting**

- The Street Lighting Committee continued to meet and discuss areas in the Township that need street lights, prioritize them and forward their recommendations to the Board.



- Street lights were added to Sprinkle Road, Interstate Parkway, Cork Street, and Park Circle Drive.
- Assisted the developer in adding new street lights in Grandview Hills (Station Hill & Depot Circle).

## **PROPERTY**

- The Board approved purchase of former building and property owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation. This parcel is located off of AZO Court and will be used as a Township maintenance facility to house equipment, etc.

## **CONFERENCES-TRAINING-CONTINUING EDUCATION**

- Board members attended the MTA Conference.
- Clerk Mohney and Deputy Clerk Sims attended Clerk's Institute.
- Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer Attended MMTA fall conference.
- Clerk and Deputy Clerk attended a Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC) Conference.
- Deputy Treasurer Robinson attended her third and final year of MMTA Basic Institute.
- Clerk Mohney and Deputy Clerk Sims completed elections training.
- Assessor Harrell and Assistant Assessor Stirton attended the Mid-Michigan Association of Assessing Officers.
- Assessor Harrell and Assistant Assessor Stirton attended an educational course "Request to Exempt or Not to Exempt".
- Clerk Mohney and Trustee Camburn attended an MTA workshop
- Parks Director Street attended the Michigan Recreation & Parks Association conference
- Superintendent attended Michigan Municipal Executive annual conference

## **BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS FOR 2018**

- Supervisor Thompson appointed to the CCTA.
- Scott Turner appointed as Resident Representative of the Kalamazoo Area Building Authority Board.
- Ron Sportel, Jennifer Jones-Newton, and Alan Faust were reappointed to the Planning Commission.
- Ronald Kuivenhoven was reappointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Bub Sherwood was reappointed and moved to 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

- Nathan VanSweden was a new 3 year term appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate.

## **COUNTY AND CITY OF KALAMAZOO**

- Continued work with the Regional Commission and the City of Kalamazoo on water and sewer contract and user rates issues.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

- Number of Regular meetings held: 23
- Number of Workshop meeting held: 12
- Special/Joint meetings held: 7