

WILLIAMS TOWNSHIP NEWS

Fall/Winter 2007 - 2008

1080 W. Midland Road

Auburn, MI 48611

(989) 662-4408

www.williamstwp.com



TOWNSHIP OFFICE HOURS

Monday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Memorial Day through Labor Day

Monday thru Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

TOWNSHIP MEETINGS SCHEDULES

All meetings are held in the Township Board
Room at 7:00 p.m. unless noted otherwise.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dec. 11	Feb. 12	May 13
Dec 27. (6 pm)	Mar. 11	June 10
Jan. 15	Apr. 8	July 8

PLANNING COMMISSION

Dec. 3	Mar. 3	June 2
Jan. 7	Apr. 7	July 7
Feb. 4	May 5	

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

January 3	April 3	July 10
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BOARD OF REVIEW

December 11, 2007 at 4:00 p.m.

QUESTIONS?

Questions may be e-mailed to the appropriate Township department by accessing the Township Website at www.williamstwp.com and clicking on "Contact Us" at the top of the home page.

Please be sure to include your name and phone number since all questions may not be able to be answered by email.

OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

- ☺ Thanksgiving: November 22nd & 23rd
- ☺ Christmas: December 24th, 25th & 26th
- ☺ New Years: December 31st, January 1st & 2nd
- ☺ Martin Luther King's B-Day: January 21st
- ☺ President's Day: February 18th
- ☺ Good Friday: March 21st
- ☺ Memorial Day: May 23rd & 26th

PASSPORT NEWS

U.S. citizens may apply for their passports during regular hours (and after hours by appointment) at the township clerk's office. A certified birth certificate with a raised seal, not a copy, and two pictures must be presented when making application. Normal processing by the U.S. Department of State is now taking six to eight weeks. Three week rush processing is available for an extra \$60 plus the cost of overnight mailers. Please apply as soon as possible for any 2008 travel.

The standard passport fee is \$97 for adults and \$82 for children younger than 16. Renewals cost \$30 less. We have application forms, renewal forms, and numerous other miscellaneous forms that may be required depending on the applicant's particular situation.

A fill in the blank application is also available online at the only official website for passport information, www.travel.state.gov. Additional information on required documentation and international travel is also available at the website.

All persons traveling by air to Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Bermuda must now have a passport to re-enter the United States. As early as mid-2008, the requirement will be extended to land border crossing (including ferries) and sea travel.

For questions or additional information, please contact the clerk's office at 662-4408.

2007 WINTER PROPERTY TAXES

You should receive your 2007 Winter Property Tax bill by December 1, 2007. If you do not receive your property tax bill by Dec. 1st or shortly thereafter, please call the Treasurer's office (662-4091) as soon as possible so that we can get a copy to you in a timely manner.

Your winter property taxes are due and payable without penalty between December 1, 2007 and February 14, 2008.

WINTER PROPERTY TAXES PAID AFTER FEBRUARY 14, 2008 WILL BE CHARGED A 3% LATE PENALTY. SUMMER 2007 PROPERTY TAXES PAID AFTER FEBRUARY 14, 2008 WILL BE CHARGED A 6% INTEREST PENALTY AND A 3 % LATE PENALTY.

Property tax payments may be made by mail, by using our drop box, or in person at the Treasurer's office. When paying by mail or when using the drop box, please include the bottom portion of your tax bill along with your check so that proper credit can be given.

Our office hours are Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm (please see top of tax bill for our Holiday closing information). Our drop box is located in the front of our office just east of the front office door. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is very secure! Please do not be afraid to make use of it. Please do not mail or drop cash. If you would like a stamped "Paid" receipt, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope, otherwise your cancelled check is your receipt.

If you have deferred your summer property taxes, they are also due at this time. If you have not yet paid your summer property tax bill you can still pay it at the Township Treasurer's office. All property tax bills not paid by February 29, 2008 will be turned over to the County Treasurer's office as delinquent.

2007 Property Tax Information

Summer Tax Authority Millage Rates

Bay County Operating	5.7257
Delta College	2.0427
Bay-Arenac ISD Operating	0.1891
Bay-Arenac Special Ed	2.8403
Bay-Arenac Career Center	1.8939
State Education Tax	6.0000
2006 Bay City School Debt	<u>2.3500</u>
PRE Total	21.0417
School Operating Millage	<u>18.0000</u>
Non-PRE Total	39.0417

Winter Tax Authority Millage Rate

Bay County Library Improv.	0.9953
Bay County Library Operating	1.0000
Bay County Mosquito	0.4478
Bay County St. Citizen	0.5000
Bay County Central Disp.	0.7000
Bay County Medical Care	0.4984
Bay County Historical	0.0952
Bay County Gypsy Moth	0.0996
Bay Metro Transit	0.7476
Williams Twp Operating	<u>4.4000</u>
Total	9.4839

(plus Special Assessments)

NOTE FROM THE ASSESSOR

The taxing/assessing process begins again. The State Equalized Value, SEV, based on average selling prices of similar properties will be finalized in early January, 2008. Any adjustment to the SEV will be based on a one year sale study instead of the traditional two year study as per a recent State Tax Commission bulletin. While it appears that the study should indicate a reduction in SEV it would be unwise for me to make that claim at this time.

The Taxable Value, that value upon which our taxes are based, will increase by the amount of the Consumer Price Index. The State Tax Commission has recently announced the CPI for the 2008 Tax Year to be 2.3%. In the past thirteen years the CPI has ranged from 1.6% to 3.7%. While the Taxable Value increases by the CPI each year; there are circumstances where the actual increase will be less than the CPI. The Taxable Value can not be greater than the State Equalized Value. In a circumstance where the CPI would increase the Taxable value above the State Equalized Value, the Taxable Value would be reduced to that of the State Equalize Value. (whew).

On occasion we still find someone that is eligible for the Principal Residence Exemption, but is not getting credit for it. You must own and live on the property in order to claim it as your principal residence and receive the 100% exemption. If you are not sure that you're receiving the exemption look at your tax bill. In the right hand column under the heading, "Tax Detail", you'll find the Princ. Res. Exp %. If you see 100.000, then you are receiving the exemption.

MARK YOUR CALENDERS

Trash pickup will be a day late after the following holidays: Christmas Day, New Year's Day & Memorial Day.

PERMANENT ABSENT VOTER LIST

A permanent list of absent voters is maintained by the township clerk for persons wanting to receive an application for an absent voter ballot prior to all elections. Applications are automatically mailed four to six weeks prior to all elections. This is a convenient solution for persons over 60 years of age, those physically unable to attend the polls without assistance, or for those away from the community that want to vote but cannot get to the polls on Election Day. For more information on our permanent absent voter list or any election related questions, call Amy or Pam at 662-4408.

SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM

Be sure to watch for the Spring/Summer newsletter that goes out in June. It will have the program calendar and other information. If you are new to the area and would like more information regarding this six week program, please call the Township office at 662-2675.

Auburn-Williams Fire Department Offers Improved Service for Emergency Access to Buildings

Beginning in January 2008, the AWFDF will offer secured emergency access to businesses and residences in the community. This is NOT mandatory, but may be useful to many business owners and residents who would like to prevent delayed or forcible entry damage when the fire fighters require emergency entry to any building during a fire or medical call.

The fire department has come to terms with the fact that the many number of keys for businesses and residences that have been collected over the years have become unmanageable. As we have also identified the growing need to provide security for everyone's keys, the Auburn Williams Fire District Administrative Board reviewed several options and decided to implement a Knox-Box Entry System. Anyone in the community, who would like to participate in this program will purchase a Knox-Box device by completing the paperwork available through the fire department, and then mount it near

your building entrance in accordance to the guidelines provided by the fire department. You then lock your key (and list of contact numbers, if you wish) in the box. All of the Knox-Boxes in our community will be opened by a unique Master Key (designed to fit only the boxes in our community and unable to be copied). A Master Key will be maintained in two of the fire-rescue trucks in a special computerized lock box. The truck boxes can only be opened by a firefighter using his/her own special pin code. Each truck's Knox-Box will record the time the box is opened and the pin number used to open the box. Written reports will be generated to review the key usage. This secured system has worked very well for fire departments across the country.

This is not a mandatory program, however individual keys will no longer be accepted at the fire department and those individual keys at the fire department will be returned in January 2008.

For more information about this system or to order a Knox-Box, please contact Fire Captain Doug Behmlander at (989) 662-2699. Further information on the Knox Box program may be found at www.knoxbox.com.

AUBURN PRESENTS ANNUAL SING-A-LONG & CONCERT

The 24th Annual Auburn Community Christmas Sing-A-Long will be presented on Sunday, December 2, 2007. Beginning at 5:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Midland Rd. (between 8 & 9 Mile Roads). The public is welcome to attend free of charge! Following the evening's free concert, light refreshments and a time of fellowship will be offered in the Social Hall.

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN



Come join Santa on Tuesday December 4th at the Williams Township Hall from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. There will be lots of fun activities for children of all ages. Come tell Santa what you want for Christmas! Cookies and punch will be provided by Auburn Area service organizations.

NEW WILLIAMS TOWNSHIP **WEBSITE LAUNCHED**

Williams Charter Township recently launched a new and improved website. The new website can be accessed at williamstwp.com. We hope that this website is informational and helpful for people to inquire about the township and the many services provided. The new website will allow township personnel to add and modify content in a much more timely manner. Please feel free to contact us to let us know how we can help make this website better meet your needs.

ORDINANCE VIOLATIONS

If you would like to report a violation of any of the Township Ordinances, you may do so by filing a written complaint with the Township Zoning Administrator. Complaint forms are available in the Township Office. The Zoning Administrator will investigate the complaint and take an appropriate course of action.

NOXIOUS VEGETATION ORDINANCE

A vacant lot that is not maintained and has become overgrown by weeds is a common complaint received by the Williams Township Zoning Administrator during the spring and summer months. To address this problem, the Williams Township Board recently adopted the Charter Township of Williams Noxious Vegetation Ordinance. This ordinance requires owners of a lot in a platted subdivision to control noxious vegetation on the entire lot. An owner of an unplatted parcel is required to control noxious vegetation within 50 feet of a boundary line or road right-of-way line. Crops, planted flowers, garden plants (including decorative grasses), trees, and planted shrubs are not considered to be noxious vegetation and are exempt from regulation by this ordinance.

FROM THE SUPERVISOR:

RECREATIONAL FIRE PIT PERMITS

Recreational Fire Pits are allowed in Williams Township by permit only. Permits can be obtained for a \$10.00 fee by completing an application and location diagram, and receiving approval from the Township Zoning Administrator. This type of permit is good for 5 years when approved and inspected.

Wood from trees and brush is the only material that may be burned. Burning cannot cause a nuisance or hazard to adjoining persons or property by reason of heat, flame, fly-ash, sparks, smoke, or odor.

TOWNSHIP BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

We have many residents and volunteers in Williams Township that make it a better place for all of us. It's very easy to take the fine job that these people do for granted. While some of the following positions do receive modest compensation, it doesn't begin to make up for the time and effort expended in their efforts to serve the township. These folks serve the township as members of the Board of Review, Building Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Auburn/Williams Fire Department, Auburn/Williams Fire District Administrative Board, and Auburn/Williams Recreation Association. To the many folks that serve on these boards and committees, thank you for your commitment to Williams Township.

One of my responsibilities as Township Supervisor is to recommend residents to the Township Board for appointment to the above boards as vacancies occur. Openings to be filled by January 1st include one member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for a 3 year term. Please contact me if you have an interest in serving our township as a member of this important board.

WASTE MANAGEMENT TRASH, RECYCLING, & YARD WASTE COLLECTION

Residents are strongly encouraged to place all trash in bags, whether in or out of trash cans (including "Green Monsters"). This will help assure that the trash ends up where it belongs and not blowing around the Township, especially on windy collection days.

Waste Management picks up yard waste weekly on your normal trash collection day through the end of November. Final yard waste collection for 2007 will occur on November 27th and 28th. Weekly yard waste collection will resume on April 1st and 2nd, 2008.

Please do not place grass clippings, yard waste, or any type of debris in ditches. This contributes to poor drainage for you, your neighbors, and the entire township. Thank you for your help and understanding.

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF FIRE HYDRANTS

Unauthorized use of a fire hydrant to obtain free water should be reported immediately to 9-1-1. Besides not paying for the water, these unauthorized users typically do not pump out the water that remains in the barrel of the hydrant, which can then freeze in cold temperatures and render the hydrant inoperable when needed in an emergency. Thank you for your help!

FIRE HYDRANTS

Protection for All in Every Season

Life safety and conservation of property have been and will continue to be the primary concerns of the Auburn-Williams Fire Department. With winter approaching, there is concern that some fire hydrants may become obstructed (and thus less visible and accessible to first responders) due to the accumulation of snow, shrubbery, weeds, or other products.

Williams Township is continuing to encourage township residents and business owners to “adopt a hydrant.” Primarily, this adoption would entail keeping a three-foot, obstacle free, clearance around the fire hydrant, and ensuring that it is also highly visible (fresh coat of red paint, township will supply the paint). These simple acts could prove some of the most important factors in the protection of lives and property. Please contact the Township Supervisor if you are interested in adopting one or more fire hydrants in Williams Township. **Thank you to the folks that have already adopted a hydrant.** Your help is greatly appreciated.

Township personnel recently serviced all of the Township’s nearly 400 fire hydrants. The hydrants are all checked for proper operation, flushed, and pumped out. Assuring proper fire hydrant operation is a very important factor in maintaining Williams Township’s excellent Public Protection Classification rating from the Insurance Services Office. Your help in keeping the area clear around a fire hydrant on or near your property is greatly appreciated; it can save the Fire Department precious time in an emergency.

PREMISES IDENTIFICATION

When an emergency occurs, it is extremely important for emergency responders to be able to identify the correct residence or building from the emergency response vehicle. The International Fire Code (IFC) provides standards to be followed for premises identification.

The IFC states that new and existing buildings shall have approved address numbers, building numbers, or approved building identification placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. The IFC specifies that address numbers be a minimum of 4 inches high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch and contrast with their background. The number should be in Arabic numerals rather than spelled out (for example, “120” instead of “One Hundred Twenty”). Buildings set back in groups that share common entrances can make quickly locating a specific building and the shortest route to it difficult. On such sites, additional signs with directional arrows should be posted.

A properly identified house or building could save valuable time when responding to an emergency. It could make a huge difference.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

For proper disposal of all hazardous materials, contact the Bay County Health Department at 895-4006. Information is also provided in the Health Department-Environmental Health department of the Bay County website at www.co.bay.mi.us.

ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Local township roads currently receiving major work are Wilder Road, between Eight Mile and Garfield. These roads have been crushed and shaped with additional gravel applied this fall. A double layer of Chip Seal will be applied in 2008, with a third layer of Chip Seal to be applied in 2009. Your patience and understanding is greatly appreciated during these road improvement projects.

LIFE IN A TOWNSHIP

From: The Michigan Townships Association

Living in a township provides families with a number of services that match the needs of the community. Township governments are efficient, low-cost units of government accountable to the people.

The Local Touch

There are three main services that state statute requires townships provide for residents and businesses: assessing, collecting taxes and running elections.

Because of townships, assessing is done locally. That means if you have questions about your assessment you can ask someone who is familiar with your property. And if you have questions about or wish to challenge your assessment, the boards of review members are residents from your community.

Because of townships, when you cast your vote in an election, you can do so at a neighborhood precinct. And, if you need an absentee ballot, your township clerk is nearby and available to assist in ensuring that you are able to vote.

Because of townships, when your tax bill is due, you can just drive down the road to drop it off at the township hall. And if you have questions about it, you can call your treasurer; instead of finding a stranger, you find a neighbor answering the phone.

Townships matter because townships are a low-cost form of government closest to the people. More than 50 percent of the state's residents live in townships. And, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, townships spend one-eighth of the amount cities do in providing services for residents.

Budget Issues Impact Local Government

Lansing is dealing with a lot of issues right now. The item getting most of the attention is the budget. With all of the problems with the state budget, some legislators feeling the pressure started pointing fingers in other directions, questioning how others were doing their jobs. Some thought that if they could move services that townships provide for residents, such as assessing, elections and tax collection as outlined in House Bill 4780 to the county, that government would save money. The reality is just the opposite.

The introduction of this legislation has caused a number of people to begin to ask questions. Is bigger really better? Economists at Michigan State University decided to study this idea. Their conclusion: Moving assessing from the township level to the county level would increase the yearly cost by 10 percent.

In fact, the more people look at how townships impact the cost of local government services, the better Michigan looks. According to U.S. Department of Census information, Michigan spends 22 percent less on local government operations than the national average. That's a savings to our residents of \$3 billion a year. Townships may be one of the few things in our state that is heading us in the right direction in order to make us more competitive in the national or worldwide marketplace.

Townships keep costs down because people like you volunteer your time to staff our fire departments, or help run elections. You understand that government doesn't need to be all things to all people; sometimes it needs to focus on what is necessary and leave it at that.

JANUARY

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FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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APRIL

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MAY

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JUNE

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JULY

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AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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27	28	29	30	31		
				X		



2008 WILLIAMS TOWNSHIP
CURBSIDE RECYCLING DATES



**HAVE A SAFE AND
HAPPY HOLIDAY!!**