

Weekly News Report

Oakland Township Sentinel, LLC

Information about the government of Oakland Township, Michigan

Editors: Robert A. Yager – yagera@comcast.net, Barbara A. Yager – bayager@comcast.net

<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/>

“Informed citizens are the foundation of effective self-government”

Township Meetings - Next Week

(The public is invited to attend and to comment. Also you can view most meetings live on Ch 17, or see a video on the Township website after the meeting. Please attend BOT and PRC if you can.)

- Tuesday, March 18, Board of Trustees, Budget Workshop, 7 P.M., Township Hall
- Wednesday, March 19, Historic District Commission (HDC), 7-9 P.M., Township Hall

Township Meetings – Next 4 Weeks

- Tuesday, March 25, Board of Trustees (BOT), Township Hall, 7-10 P.M. (Approve Budget)
 - Tuesday, April 1, Planning Commission (PC), Township Hall, 7 P.M.
 - Wednesday, April 2, Safety Paths and Trails Committee (SPTC), PCCM, 7 P.M.
 - Tuesday, April 8, Dog Park Task Open House, 5 PM
 - Wednesday, April 9, Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Township Hall, 7 P.M.
 - Tuesday, April 15, Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), Township Hall, 7 P.M.
 - Wednesday April 16, Historic District Commission (HDC), Township Hall, 7 P.M.
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Corrections & Clarifications

Local Fire Department Cost per Resident Comparisons

Last week we provided a comparison of local fire departments tax millages and tax per resident. As John Giannangeli points out in a letter to the editor on page 20 our Fire Department has sometimes been given General Fund money to supplement the fire millage. So the total annual expense, not just fire millage taxes is a fairer comparison. We did not make clear in last week's report that the idea of \$/resident as a measure was not Chief Strelchuk's idea, but the Sentinel's. So please do not blame him if you do not find that measure useful. Chief Strelchuk did provide the raw tax millage data but he did not suggest \$ per resident as a performance measure. We are sorry for any confusion that may have caused. Perhaps when this year's actual expenses are totaled, not just the budgeted maximum allowable, we may attempt a more detailed comparison.

Orion Township Fire Millage may increase from 0.98 to 2.6.

Last week we understated the tax increase that will likely be requested by Orion Fire Chief, Bob Smith. Discussions with Chief Smith reveal that he is asking for a 1.6 mil increase from 0.98 to 2.58. We said last week that he was asking for a 0.62 mil increase to a total of 1.6 mils. Oakland Township Fire millage is currently 1.0 mil.

Information added to our website this past week – Link:

<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/>

Parks and Recreation: Lawsuit

Board of Trustees (BOT)

Link to Township website page: [BOT – Township p](#)

Link to Oakland Township Sentinel webpage: [BOT – Sentinel/](#)

Summary - Board of Trustees Meeting - 3/11/14										
Township Website Video Chapter	Approx minutes	Agenda Item #	Agenda Item (Green = pass, Red = Fail, Black = discussion only, no vote)	Robin Buxar - Trustee	Michael Bailey Trustee	Jeanne Langlois - Treasurer	Terry Gonser - Supervisor	Karen Reilly - Clerk	Sharon McKay - Trustee	Maureen Thalmann - Trustee
1	0.5	I.	Call to order,Pledge of Allegiance							
1	0.5	I.	Roll call (P = present, A = absent)	P	P	P	P	A	A	P
2	0.5	II	Announcements, Proclamations, Presentations				Yes	A	A	
3	29	III	Public comment - non-agenda items					A	A	
4	5	IV.	Amended agenda to add items VII. - 0 and VII. - 6							
		V. - CONSENT AGENDA						A	A	
5	3	1	Approved minutes - 2/25/14 meeting - with slight changes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
5	15	2	Approved bills - \$171,829	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
5	3	3	Approved \$600 for Memorial Day Parade - Rochester	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
5	3	4	Approved water service for home at 1406 Dutton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
5	3	5	Set 2014-15 meeting dates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
		VI. - OLD BUSINESS						A	A	
6	31	1	Agreed to go forward with \$11,400 ordinance codification by consulting firm General Code	No	Yes	No	Yes	A	A	Yes
7	2	2	Appointed Eugene Beres to ZBA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
8	5	3	Approved \$108,000 for Ambulance refurbishment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
		PUBLIC HEARING						A	A	
9	10		2014-15 Proposed budget					A	A	
		VII. - PENDING BUSINESS						A	A	
9	30	0	Voted to have PRC continue to manage the Land Preservation Fund	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	A	A	No
10	45	1	Reviewed Draft Budget for 2014-2015					A	A	
11	6	2	Q&A Parks and Land Preservation Budgets					A	A	
12	3	3	Renewed Landscape Services Contract	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
13	5	4	Agreed to insist that original copies of key official records be filed centrally at at Township Hall under control of Clerk	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A	A	Yes
15	1	VIII. - Township Manager Ann Capela's Report						A	A	
15	24	IX. - Board Reports		No	No	Yes	No	A	A	Yes
16	5	X. -PUBLIC COMMENT						A	A	

II. Announcements – Supervisor Gonser

- Court took no action, no charges filed in recent allegations of BOT OMA violations
- August 5 is deadline for anyone wanting to run in the August Republican Primary
- Election workers are needed – sign up at Township Hall
- SAW grants to be decided 3/12/14 by state

III. Public Comment

There was a larger than usual attendance at this BOT meeting. We hope this is indicative of a trend to more citizen involvement. There are 119 seats – plenty of room for you.

Trevor Barkham – (Owner of Rochester Cider Mill) thanked those who came to support his request to Board for modification of court order restricting his allowable business activities and seasonal operations only at his Rochester Cider Mill. He said that he will not present to the Board until the 3/25 BOT meeting.

Libby Dwyer – OT resident

- supported Trevor Barkham's request for changes to court order for Rochester Cider Mill
- feels lawsuit by PRC Commissioners should be dropped and differences settled internally

Mia Norton – Brewster Rd.

Suggested a township ordinance that would address safety concerns she has about several privately owned helicopters operating in her area and flying dangerously close to her house and pool (with grandchildren present)

Judy Workings – OT resident, former Clerk, current ZBA member

Would like many more details about proposed Human Resources new full-time employee (FTE) including explanation of need

Joanna VanRaaphorst – OT resident, 2010 Democratic candidate for state representative seat currently held by Tom McMillan

- Summarized information about Rochester area diversity efforts
- Expressed the opinion that a recent Tom McMillan fund-raiser event brought in a speaker who fosters lack of respect for people of different beliefs

John Markel , who said he attended the above fundraiser, questioned the credentials of the organization that has criticized the speaker, citing negative comments about the organization on a website

Judy Keyes – OT resident, BOT member until resignation in late 2013

Stated that courts issued a “reprimand” in court case discussed by Supervisor Gonser in Announcements (see above). Supervisor Gonser disagreed.

Richard Blust – OT resident

Asked BOT to consider finding a single waste hauler to save residents money and to reduce damage to roads by multiple trucks each week. His recently resurfaced road is already suffering from 4 trucks per week. Mr. Blust presented data on lower costs in surrounding municipalities that have such contracts

(Supervisor Gonser commented that there is divided opinion on this matter in the township, as some are happy with the current situation, for example subdivisions that have made a good contract for the whole sub and are happy with service and fear a change. However he agreed to have the BOT consider this issue. Trustee Thalmann emphasized reducing road damage as a high priority in her opinion.)

Rich Bosler – OT resident

Told how his sub of 346 homes has contracted with a single waste hauler and has low price of \$16 per house per month. In a follow-up email to the Sentinel Mr. Bosler supplied this additional detail –

“My subdivision is The Crossings of Oakland off Adams Rd. north of Silverbell Rd. Our current hauler is Allied Waste and our management company negotiates with the haulers on bids and brings them to the BOD for approval. We are happy about this. However, three trucks come through during summer. One for garbage, one for recycle material (paper & plastic and cans, bottles) and one for yard waste. So the roads do take a beating.”

Frank Ferriolo – OT resident

He pointed out that the microphone problem still has not been corrected, it is hard to hear; Treasurer Langlois went to resolve the problem

V. Consent Agenda

(A consent agenda is intended to pass several routine matters in one motion and vote without discussion as they are deemed non-controversial. However, Board members who want to discuss individual items can request to have them discussed.)

V-1 – Approval of minutes was removed from the consent agenda by Trustee Thalmann. Several changes were suggested and then the minutes were approved.

V-2 – Bills were removed from the consent agenda to allow discussion prior to approval at the request of Trustee Buxar. At the request of a resident, she verified that the bills charged to Land Preservation Fund were appropriate for that fund.

OLD BUSINESS

VI. -1– Ordinance Codification

For \$11,400, General Code of Rochester, NY will

- Group our 104 ordinances in logical sequences; this may require “cut and paste” to integrate items that show up in several different ordinances but really should be together in one
- Review each ordinance vs. Michigan State Law and point out any conflicts
- Review each ordinance to identify any internal conflicts between ordinances.
- Provide the output on-line and in hard copy

Benefits to Oakland Township include:

- Easier to find an ordinance provision that applies to your issue
- Ordinances On-line ensures we refer to the current ordinance and not an obsolete one.
- A starting point for ordinance upgrades

There was a question about whether this would eliminate the need to pay Williams and Works \$4,000 to help us update Zoning Ordinance #16, which we know to be out of compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEa) governing zoning. After some discussion, it was determined that this effort will only identify what is wrong in detail with Zoning Ordinance #16, but we will still have to do work to correct it. This still requires help from a consultant, though perhaps less than \$4,000. Part of the job – identifying the problems in detail will already be done.

Langlois and Buxar, who voted NO, said they were not against the concept and price; they simply wanted more time to review and understand the lengthy proposal document and have the vote at a future meeting.

Langlois expressed the desire to move quickly on the specific task of updating Zoning Ordinance #16, as it is known to out of compliance with state law (MZEA). It was agreed that it and related ordinances should be General Code's first priority.

VI. – 2 - Appointed Eugene Beres to Zoning Board of Appeals

Mr. Beres was appointed as an alternate. There were no other candidates who applied. Trustee Bailey spoke highly of Mr. Beres, having known him for years.

VI. – 3 – Refurbishment of Ambulance A-1 (Alpha – 1) - \$108,000

This saves about \$50,000 compared to buying a complete new ambulance with a new "box". An ambulance comes in two main parts. The chassis, cab and motor are one and the "box" is another. The "box" often outlasts the chassis. This ambulance had a bad diesel motor that apparently had design defects that precluded repair. As a result it would not exceed 20 MPH during the first few minutes of a run, until it warmed up. We will have a company (Wheelcoach) put our existing "box" onto a new chassis, cab and motor.

PUBLIC HEARING – 2014-2015 PROPOSED BUDGET

A general desire was expressed for public review of the quarterly statement that the Board reviews individually at present. Members of the public appreciated the additional detail that has been provided by breaking some line items into several components for more clarity. One resident requested a closer look at Fire and Police budgets to make sure we are providing what is needed for public safety.

VII. – 0 - Management of the Land Preservation Fund

(This was added to the agenda when Buxar, Bailey and Langlois reminded the Board that it had been scheduled by recommendation of two trustees, as per the new by-laws. Apparently it had inadvertently been omitted. The discussion below is on the video at the end of public comment)

This issue has been a source of "unrest" as Trustee Bailey diplomatically phrased it at the last BOT meeting. A memo sent out by former Township Manager on April 1, 2013 said -

Charter Township of Oakland

4393 Collins Road, Rochester, Michigan 48306-1670

Telephone: (248) 651-4440

Fax Number: (248) 651-1510

www.oaklandtownship.org

April 1, 2013

Ms. Milos-Dale, Director, Parks and Recreation

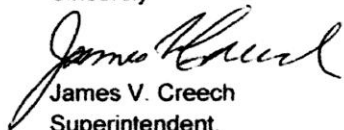
Mr. David Mackley, Chairman, Parks and Recreation Commission

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND PRESERVATION FUND 408

Please be advised that beginning with the 2013-2014 fiscal year (April 1, 2013), administration of the Land Preservation Fund, including all millages, fund balances, properties and other assets will be directed by the Charter Township of Oakland Superintendent and the Board of Trustees. Since administration of this fund has previously been administered by Parks and Recreation by default, please facilitate this transfer of responsibility by assisting the Superintendent in identifying all Township properties and other assets which were purchased with Land Preservation funds. The Parks and Recreation administration/commission may be called upon in the future for advice and counsel as required.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely



James V. Creech

Superintendent,

Charter Township of Oakland

This prompted the Parks and Recreation Commission to have a legal opinion prepared in response stating that this fund should be managed by PRC. This was followed by a joint meeting to discuss the matter July 15, 2013. The memo was not rescinded, but neither did the Board act on it. Residents interpreted the actual situation in various ways.

We investigated and found that voters had been told by previous boards that this fund would be administered by PRC and voters may have factored this into their decisions. Indeed the origin of Parks and Recreation Commission was initially the formation of the Oakland Township Association as a community reaction to a Board that had allowed utility companies to cut down large, old, beautiful oak trees along Inwood in the late 60's without considering resident input.

(Drilling under trees to place utility lines is an option that can be used to save large trees.) Clearly the motivation for an elected rather appointed Parks and Recreation Commission was a least in part reluctance to trust a Board of Trustee's to preserve the township's natural features.

Buxar moved and Bailey seconded the motion to have PRC manage this fund as they had since 2001. Langlois pointed out as all bills go through the township offices and the board can and does examine them now, she is in favor of this. Thalmann wanted to postpone the vote until it was clear as the budgeting process unfolded, what level of oversight at what level of detail the Board would have.

There was comment:

Frank Ferriolo supported the effort to clarify this matter.

John Markel said he supported it only if the Board understood the details of consultants in 408-756 and trusted that funds would be managed well.

Judy Keyes supported the motion, thanked Trustee Buxar for bringing it forward and pointed out that the four longest serving PRC members have 70+ years of combined experience and service. (As stated in the lawsuit against them.)

Cam Mannino pointed out that all previous communications from the Board and PRC prior to the successful ballot millage (0.75mils – dropped to 0.6916 mils by state law) approvals in 2001 (60%/40%) and 2006 (66%/34%) stated that PRC would manage / administer this fund. She expressed the opinion that the extension to 2021 approved in 2006 by a vote of 66%/34% reflected the voters increased satisfaction and confidence in the PRC. Details of these communications to the public can be seen at this link:

<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/land-preservation-fund-report.pdf>

There was some discussion and argument between residents and some Board members about the origin of the Creech memo and whether or not it had been discussed by the Board even if it had not been voted on. Thalmann, Barkham, and Michalski had input to this. Treasurer Langlois suggested that she wanted to focus on moving forward. That seemed to refocus discussion on the motion.

Elizabeth Markel asked why people with 70 years experience need so many consultants.

Supervisor Gonser expressed concern that some of the expenses in the fund's budget were either excessive or not appropriate for this fund:

- Charging a % of nearly all bills to this fund
 - 25% of Park Director Milos-Dale salary
 - Land Stewardship Manager + Professional consultants at \$24,000
 - Legal fees
-

He also stated that this is not a parks millage.

Director Milos-Dale explained that the term consultant is misleading. Actually these are specialists that are hired because what they do is not amenable to a do-it-yourself effort, for example:

- Prescribed burns need licensed people to avoid losing control of the fire, endangering local residents homes and safety of workers
- Design and engineering work is best done by architects and engineers
- Surveying to start proceedings to deal with encroachment requires license surveyors
- Vegetation management is covered 67% by a grant
- Specialized botanical surveys need trained specialists

Trustee Bailey expressed confidence that PRC had the skills and knowledge that he did not, including the skill to decide what consultants are needed.

Judy Keyes recommended that the Board focus for savings on their own budgets, citing the legal services line item that is up over \$100,000 vs. past years as an example

Supervisor Gonser suggested that FOIA requests and other legal challenges (Keyes has made some) in the “frivolous pursuit of minutia” is the principle cause of high legal bills.

No more discussion.

Motion Carried 3/2 YES – Buxar, Bailey, Langlois; NO – Gonser, Thalmann

There was applause from some residents who were present.

VII. -1 2014-15 Draft Budget Review

After 45 minutes of discussion of various budget line items, the Board expressed a desire to Supervisor Gonser to schedule a budget workshop to address important questions that would require board decision and were not amenable to Q&A approach one-on-one with the Township Manager. For example, Treasurer Langlois brought up these items:

- Is 5% the correct wage and salary increase to budget for (not a promised increase, just a budget number)
 - Should we have a uniform approach to budgets for training, conferences, etc?
 - Capital outlay for big ticket items can cause a lot of General Fund money to be needed. This could possibly deplete the fund balances. Treasurer Langlois wants to make sure the
-

Board is aware of the capital outlays in more detail, what they are for, why the timing, they several year plan and the effect on fund balances going forward several years.

VII – 2 - Q&A Parks (Fund 208) and Land Preservation (408) Budgets

There were a number of questions from Board members and answers by Parks Director Milos-Dale. Ms. Milos-Dale had supplied written answers to the entire collection of questions she had received since the Budget Workshop on February 19. These can be seen in the Board packet.

X. Public Comment

Frank Ferriolo had two comments:

- He received an email during the meeting that the audio is still bad when watching on TV
- He requested that the attorney situation in Parks be resolved in this budget process. Will we have one or two lawyers or a blend

Budget / Taxes

See discussion under BOT.

Fire Department (Oakland Township Fire Department, OTFD)

Link to township website page: [Fire Department - Township p](#)

Link to Oakland Township Sentinel webpage: [Fire Department - Sentinel/](#)

Troy Mostly Volunteer Fire Department - a Model for Oakland Township?

John Giannangeli suggested in his letter to the editor – page 20 that Troy with its largely volunteer Fire Department might be useful to study. We did some high spot research – website only. A lot more digging would have to be done if Troy's model, all or part was to be used. Troy Fire Department fights fires only and does no EMS. They have 10 full-time and 166 volunteers with maximum allowed of 180. Troy Fire Chief William S. Nelson on makes this statement on the fire department webpages

<https://www.troymi.gov/Government/Departments/FireDept.aspx>

Why doesn't the Fire Department provide EMS?

- *The City of Troy experiences approximately 6,000 requests for EMS annually and approximately 1,000 requests for fire service. It would be difficult to retain volunteers with this additional EMS workload. *The fire department does, however, assist EMS with extrication and technical rescue functions when necessary.*
- *The City of Troy chooses a proven alternative method of providing EMS. A private provider is contracted to provide paramedic first responder and advance life support ambulance service. The PFR units are dedicated to Troy and respond in conjunction with ALS ambulances as part of a performance-driven contract that requires either an ambulance or a first responder to be on scene of medical emergencies in 5 minutes or less for 90% of all such incidents.*
- *The annual cost for private provider EMS in Troy is approximately \$500,000.00. PFR units and ALS ambulances work closely with the fire and police departments as a "third" emergency service.*

*So Chief Nelson confirms what OTFD Chief paul Strelchuk says, it's hard to get and retain people willing to do the rigorous work to be an Advanced Life Support level Emergency Medical Technician. A thorough comparison of Troy Fire Department and our OTFD would be complex and I leave that to the Board of Trustees.

Historic District Commission (HDC)

Link to Township website page: [HDC - Township p](#)

Link to Oakland Township Sentinel webpage: [HDC Sentinel /](#)

Oakland Township suggests that the historic railroad bridge at mile 33.7 on the Paint Creek Trail might be considered a historic resource. Stop there this spring and go down to the bench by the bridge (down a few steps) and marvel at the massive timber construction. There are some thoughts of ripping this out and replacing it, as a solution to erosion of the south support system.

Oakland Township Historical Society (OTHS)

Link to OTHS website: <http://www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org/>

Oakland Township Historical Society is not a government body, but a private organization. They play a role in helping us remember our historical roots.

Consider joining, volunteering or contributing items of interest. Their most recent newsletter Jan-Feb 2004 with contact information is on their website (see above). Join for \$25 and receive member benefits.

Older Persons' Commission

Website homepage: <http://www.opcseniorcenter.org/>

Link to Sentinel webpage: [OPC - Sentinel Website/](#)

Link to OPC February Newsletter: [OPC Newsletter .pdf](#)

OPC, run by cooperation of three communities via a Board and located in Rochester, has a huge number of programs, classes, trips, exercise facilities and a full woodworking shop. See their extensive newsletter at the link above.

Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC)

Link to Township webpage: [Parks - Township Website p](#)

Link to Oakland Township Sentinel webpage: [Parks – Sentinel Website/](#)

Lawsuit

Commissioners Roger Schmidt and Ann Marie Rogers joined resident Elizabeth Markel in filing a complaint in Oakland County Circuit Court seeking the court to instruct Commissioners David Mackley, Joseph Peruzzi, Alice Tomboulion and Colleen Barkham to stop violating the Open Meetings Act and pay the plaintiff's court costs. They don't seek reversal of any decisions made at PRC meetings. Excerpts from the complaint can be seen in this *Special News Report #3*

<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/special-news-report-3-03102014.pdf>

The entire complaint can be seen here:

http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/20140307_amended_complaint_filed_100695732.pdf

Prescribed Burns

We do these from time to time in our parks. At this link is an MDNR article about one they are doing soon to improve duck hunting. Ours are generally to improve wildlife habitat. This article has a lot of background about the detailed care needed to do one of these.

<http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDNR/bulletins/a380ff>

Are Land Preservation Fund Monies being misappropriated?

At the 2/25/13 Board of Trustees meeting Parks & Recreation Commission Treasurer Roger Schmidt said:

“With regard to the Commission: Since there’s only three of us new members, on the commission a lot of stuff is kept from us and we know that because we’ve discovered this on those emails. Also, they still continue to attack our character. We are constantly outvoted. Just recently we voted to have one attorney and we were outvoted on that. And that’s going to come up again because we keep bringing it up. And we know for a fact that this Land Preservation Fund has been used as what I would call, a slush fund; and they wonder why the*

Board wants to take it from them and have more control over it. And that's one of the reasons, just like the taxidermy thing and I can go on and on."

*By "they", I presumed he meant the members of the board whom he is currently suing.

I emailed Treasurer Schmidt a request to explain this in more detail at the PRC meeting 3/12. My thought was that as Treasurer he is charged by PRC by-laws with reviewing each voucher**, so he should be able to prevent mis-use of funds or if outvoted at least make his opinion known on each bill he feels is charged to this fund inappropriately. In reviewing all minutes since he was elected, I see no evidence of bills being challenged by Treasurer Schmidt for being inappropriately charged to Land Preservation.

**From PRC by-laws, 12/12/2012, page 3:

Section 6 – Treasurer: In addition to any other duties prescribed by law, it shall be the duty of the treasurer to arrange for the following duties to be completed accurately and promptly:

- A. Maintain accurate financial records for the Commission.***
- B. See that monies are distributed in an efficient matter.***
- C. Assist in planning an annual budget.***
- D. Provide signature to approved monthly vouchers.***

At the March 13, 2013 PRC meeting, Treasurer Schmidt made these comments to further clarify his "slush fund" comments of February 25.

"With regards to this Land Preservation Fund being a slush fund, I made that statement and kind of loosely. And it keeps coming up at every meeting. So hopefully I can put it rest this evening. Number one; there was a mounted owl that was \$250 that came out of that fund. Now maybe we should have a Land Owl Preservation Fund for that. And the other thing is that there are some other things that I don't want to mention that came also out of that fund. So with that in mind and being the Treasurer of the commission, I called it a slush fund. But there are some things I'm sure that if the residents knew it was being used for they wouldn't approve of that."

Planning Commission (PC)

Link to Township web page: [Planning Commission – Township Website p](#)

Link to Oakland Township Sentinel web page: [Planning Commission – Sentinel Website/](#)

Next meeting: April 1st, 7P.M., Township Hall

(Probably they will work on the revision of the Goodison Plan.)

Police / Sheriff's Department

Link to Township webpage: [Sheriff Dept Township Website p](#)

Link to Oakland Township Sentinel webpage: [Sheriff Department – Sentinel Website/](#)

Safety Path & Trails Committee (SPTC)

Link to Township webpage: [SPTC – Township p](#)

Link to Oakland Township Sentinel webpage: [SPTC - Sentinel/](#)

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 2, 7 P.M., Paint Creek Cider Mill

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

Link to webpage on Township website: [ZBA – Township p](#)

Editorials

None

Resident Questions Answered

(Do you have a question that we may be able to research? Send it to us.)

Q - How does the recall process work for township elected officials?

A- You get the statement of reason approved by the county and then get a petition signed by 25% of the township voters who voted for Governor in the last election. That is about 1338 signatures since 5352 voted for Governor. A detailed procedure can be seen at this link:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/Recal_Summary_for_Counties_426253_7.pdf

Letters to the Editors

(We welcome these, especially those that add missing facts or correct factual errors, or ask questions of interest to the general community. Facts presented should be verifiable by readers. Please restrict comments to local government affairs.)

Fire Department Funding and Staffing Ideas

“Robert, first thanks for publishing the Oakland Township Sentinel.

I am writing regarding the fire department chart included in the March 7, 2014 edition.

One reading the Chart might conclude that the Oakland Township Fire Department is underfunded.

The chart used the mileage rate revenue per person.

The budget for 2013/2014 however is significantly higher at \$1,591K.

Therefore the actual expenditure is \$94.82 per residence. Significantly higher the millage rate of \$62.70

As your publication stated, the Board of Trustees has chosen to supplement the fire department with funds from the General Fund.

I think this is very prudent and responsible At times the required spending comes in large "Chunks" for capital improvements such new fire-fighting equipment. It would not be prudent or in the best interest of the residence if the millage was targeted at that high level. In the best case we could end up with a surplus in the fire department paid for by the residence. Worst case, someone could figure a way to spend it on unnecessarily. Of course our government officials would never do that.

Robert you stated you thought spending per resident is a reasonable measure. It certainly is one which should be looked at. However I think most know that spending more does not necessarily give you the desired results.

I believe that our fire department is excellent. At the Board of Trustee meetings which I have attended, the response time presented was very impressive.

A great measure of how effective our fire department is and how well it is serving our community would be to compare it to other response times.

As you may be aware, our fire department is staffed by a core of full time fire fighters and supplemented by Volunteers. As a resident I believe this is working well. We could confirm this by comparing response times.

The chart has left off one very large and key community.

This is Troy which I understand is almost completely volunteer.

I am afraid the information provided was selected to present one point of view and not other viable solutions.

Thank You."

John Giannangeli – OT Resident

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You can also find *Weekly News Report* on our website home page where a link is posted each week - late Friday or early Saturday: <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/>

Back issues are also found on our website at this link:

<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/weekly-news-report/>

Acronyms Guide

BOT – Board of Trustees

LLC – Limited Liability Corporation

MZEA – Michigan Zoning Enabling Act

OMA – Open Meetings Act, Michigan Act 267 of 1976

OT – Charter Township of Oakland (Oakland Township for short)

PC – Planning Commission

PRC – Parks and Recreation Commission

SPTC – Safety Paths and Trails Committee

ZBA – Zoning Board of Appeals

*******The End of 3/14/2014 Weekly News Report*******
