



City of Otsego Agenda

A Publication of the City of Otsego

Winter 2011

JOIN US FOR OTSEGO'S Downtown Business's Open Houses

Friday, December 2, 2011

Downtown businesses will be holding Open Houses from 5pm-7pm before the Parade.

For More Information, please call Debbie at 692-2045

Holiday Parade December 2nd at 7pm



TRANSFER STATION HOLIDAY HOURS

OPEN - Thurs., Dec. 22, 2011 - UNTIL NOON
CLOSED - Saturday, Dec. 24, 2011
OPEN - Thursday, December 29, 2011
CLOSED - Saturday, Dec. 31, 2011

City Hall Will Be Closed

December 23, 26, & 30, 2011, & January 2, 2012

CITY OF OTSEGO CITY COMMISSION



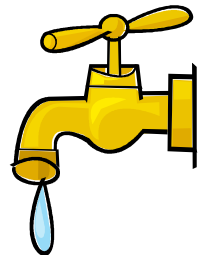
Commissioners were sworn in at the Organizational Meeting held on November 14th. The Commission welcomes Stacy Rogers to the Commission. At the Organizational Meeting, Tom Gilmer was appointed Mayor and Kathy Misner, Mayor Pro-Tem. The Commission thanked Joel M. Thompson for his many years of service on the City Commission. (L to R)Cyndi Trobeck, Stacy Rogers, Tom Gilmer, Molly Wieber, and Kathy Misner.

**Holiday Wishes From
The City of Otsego Staff
Have a Happy &
Safe Holiday!**



FROZEN WATER PIPES

If you experience discoloration in your water or reduced water pressure, please notify City Hall immediately at 692-3391. Leave one faucet running with a pencil size stream of water. Please be aware that although temperatures may rise above freezing, the potential still exists for freezing water lines. Do not stop running water until you have called City Hall and been advised to do so. Otsego City Hall must be notified when you begin running your water, for any potential adjustment to be made on your utility bill.



DROP BOX LOCATED
AT THE NORTHEAST
CORNER OF CITY HALL

City Manager's View



City Manager
Thad Beard



As we enter into the Holiday Season, and we approach the New Year, the City welcomes the new City Commission. For the first time, in my eleven years, the City had four of the five positions available on the City Commission. This was a result of a Commissioner resigning, which led to Commissioner Trobeck being appointed. The City Charter requires the appointed position to be elected at the next General Election. So, while there are usually three seats available, this time there were four. Below is a picture of the four newly elected Commissioners being sworn into Office.



Audit: Another seasonal event is the presentation and review of the Annual Audit. I am quite pleased of the fact that the City obtained another unqualified (clean) audit. I am even more pleased with the confirmation that the City actually spent less than was budgeted for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. In all, approximately \$50,000 was remaining at the end of the fiscal year. As a direct result, the City's General Fund Balance was increased from approximately 10% to 15%.

The City is fortunate to have personnel who are creative enough to adjust to the changes brought on by the new Michigan economy and humble enough to accept and even request ideas for improvement and efficiencies. During the Holiday Season it is especially appropriate for me to share my thanks for all of the City employees. Regrettably, employees who are now going on three years with no pay increase, who make Otsego such a great place to work, play and ultimately stay! Thank you for your service!



2011 Winter Taxes

Matthew Storbeck, City Treasurer

Winter tax bills will be mailed to arrive on December 1. Please note that tax bills are now sent to property owners, as well as mortgage servicers. If you do not receive one, please call 692-2741, and we will send another bill. Residential property owners are encouraged to check their Principal Residence Exemption to make sure they are receiving the proper percentage of credit for school operating taxes. If not, please call before December 9th, and an adjustment can be made for this year's taxes. Otherwise, corrections to the Winter Tax cannot be made until July of 2012.

Taxpayers wishing to have their tax payments taken directly from their bank account may contact us to set up this service. Payments will not be transferred until December 26th or February 10th, at the taxpayer's discretion. This will allow us time to make contact in cases where problems arise. Also, please remember that receipts will not be mailed back for payments received by mail unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is sent with the payment. Please keep the top part of the tax bill and check number for your receipt. Also, you may access the City's web site at www.cityofotsego.org to retrieve tax and payment information, as well as make electronic payments.

New DPW Employee

Welcome Gary Smalley!

Gary recently retired from UPS where he was employed for 30 years. He has lived in Otsego for the last 18 years. Gary has been married to his wife Becky for 23 years, and they have a son who is a senior in high school. He also has two daughters, a granddaughter and a grandson. In his spare time he enjoys hunting and farming. Gary is excited about his new job and is looking forward to meeting the residents of the City of Otsego.



WINTER PARKING RULES

Beginning November 1, parking is once again PROHIBITED on any public street in the City of Otsego from 2:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. Parking is prohibited during the months of November through April in order to facilitate snow removal.

2011 DECEMBER BOARD OF REVIEW

The December Board of Review will be meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2011, at 8:00 a.m. If you have a discrepancy regarding your Principal Residence Exemption on your Winter 2011 taxes, you must contact City Hall **before** Friday, December 9, 2011. If you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer's Office at 692-2741.

REMINDERS

As Winter Returns -

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- WATCH FOR SNOW PLOWING VEHICLES
- REMEMBER FRONT YARD PARKING IS PROHIBITED.
- REMEMBER SIDEWALKS NEED TO BE KEPT CLEAR



NEW RECYCLE INFORMATION

Residents of the City of Otsego will be given carts to replace the current bins that are used to pick up Recycling. The City contracts with Best-way Disposal to collect recyclable materials the first Tuesday of each month from each home that has a recycle bin placed on the curb. **During the December collection (Tuesday, December 6th), the current bins will be exchanged with carts.** Please leave your bins on the curb, as it will take a few days for all bins to be exchanged. If you do not have bins and wish to participate please contact City Hall. There is no longer a need to separate recycling materials. All materials must be placed in the single cart container for pickup, materials that are not in the container, will not be picked up. The new use of the cart will allow for more materials to be placed in the single container and will allow for safer, more efficient collection of materials. If you have questions, please contact City Hall or visit the City's website at www.cityofotsego.org.



POLICE BEAT



Police Chief, Gordon Konkle

I would like to take this time to address questions that we receive involving some of our City Ordinances. I know that I have talked about these in the past, but I'm just as guilty as anyone when it comes to remembering things that at the time don't pertain to me. So with that in mind, I would like to cover the most common contacts we have with citizens involving ordinance violations. For the past several years whenever we received a complaint or when an Officer discovers a violation of a City Ordinance while on patrol, the person in violation was either contacted by the Officer or if no one was home, then a letter was sent to the resident advising of the violation and giving a time for the violation to be corrected. This is typically referred to as a ten-day notice. The vast majority of people

receiving one of these letters corrects the problem well within the time limit and never hears back from us. If not, then one of our Officers would make contact with the resident in an attempt to get the violation corrected. As a last case alternative a ticket would be issued requiring the person to appear before a District Court Judge to answer why the violation was not corrected.

For Ordinance Violations, we will typically contact a resident for mowing tall grass, removing leaves that have been raked into the street after the City's leaf pickup is over, as well as, trash, garbage, and inoperable or unlicensed vehicles in the yard. There also seems to be confusion on parking. This time of year, parking is not allowed on City streets from 2:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. and there is no parking allowed at anytime in the front yard of any residence unless on an improved surface (gravel, cement, or blacktop). If you have a driveway construction project or are having out of town guests, please contact us and we will allow temporary parking in violation of the Ordinance. These re-

quests will only be approved if they are temporary in nature, and they need to be made in advance to avoid a citation.

For the past two years as we try to cut costs we no longer mail out letters, instead if no one is home when the Officer attempts to contact a resident in regards to an Ordinance Violation the Officer will instead leave a notice on the door advising of the violation and a timetable to have it corrected. While saving substantially on mailing costs, sometimes it can be confusing because these forms which are intended to be a "one size fits all" notice can at times leave a message that, as my grandfather used to say, is as clear as mud. If you receive one of these notices, you need to only be concerned about the section that is marked or the part that is written in describing the violation. And of course if you have a question please call so we can help you to understand what it is all about.



2011 PROPERTY TAXES COLLECTED BY THE CITY OF OTSEGO

Below is a breakdown of the property taxes collected by the City of Otsego by resolution of the Board of Supervisors October 15, 1962 under the auspices of Act 82, Public Acts of 1961. The separate taxes of each operating unit have been combined into one column as shown below. The millage rates represent dollars per \$1,000 of taxable value. [Note: Residential properties are exempt from school operating millage up to the percent that property is claimed as the homeowner's principal residence (P.R.E.).]

TAXING UNIT	TOTAL RATE	BREAK- DOWN	NON-P.R.E. PERCENT OF TOTAL	P.R.E. PERCENT OF TOTAL	SUMMER BILLING	WINTER BILLING
City	13.1900					
Operating		12.0854	21.6%	31.9%	12.0854	
Solid Waste Reduc- tion		1.1046	2.0%	2.9%	1.1046	
County	5.8975					
Operating		4.6577	8.3%	12.3%	4.6577	
Road Tax		0.9998	1.8%	2.6%		0.9998
Senior Service		0.2400	0.4%	0.6%		0.2400
Otsego Public Schools	25.0000					
Operating		18.0000	32.2%	EXEMPT		18.0000
2004 Debt		7.0000	12.5%	18.5%		7.0000
Allegan Co. Int. Schools	4.1217					
Operating		0.1157	0.2%	0.3%		0.1157
Voted Special Ed.		2.5297	4.5%	6.7%		2.5297
Voted Voc. Ed.		1.4763	2.6%	3.9%		1.4763
State Education Tax	6.0000		10.7%	15.9%	6.0000	
Otsego District Public Library	1.6388					
Operating		0.9888	1.8%	2.6%		0.9888
Debt		0.6500	1.2%	1.7%		0.6500
TOTAL MILLAGE (NON-P.R.E.)	55.8480		100.0%		23.8477	32.0003
LESS SCHOOL OPERATING FOR EXEMPT HOMESTEADS	-18.0000					-18.0000
TOTAL MILLAGE (HOMESTEAD)	37.8480			100.0%	23.8477	14.0003



OTSEGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Facts About Chimney Fires

Creosote & Chimney Fires: What You Must Know

Fireplaces and wood stoves are designed to safely contain wood-fuel fires, while providing heat for a home. The chimneys that serve them have the job of expelling the byproducts of combustion – the substances produced when wood burns. These include smoke, water vapor, gases, unburned wood particles, hydrocarbon volatile, tar fog and assorted minerals. As these substances exit the fireplace or wood stove, and flow up into the relatively cooler chimney, condensation occurs. The resulting residue that sticks to the inner walls of the chimney is called creosote. Creosote is black or brown in appearance. It can be crusty and flaky tar-like, drippy and sticky...or shiny and hardened. Often, all forms will occur in one chimney system. Whatever form it takes, creosote is highly combustible. If it builds up in sufficient quantities – and catches fire inside the chimney flue instead of the firebox of the fireplace or wood stove – the result will be a chimney fire. Although any amount of creosote can burn, sweeps are concerned when creosote builds up in sufficient quantities to sustain a long, hot, destructive chimney fire. Certain conditions encourage the buildup of creosote. Simply put, restricted air supply, unseasoned wood and cooler-than normal chimney temperatures are all factors that can accelerate the buildup of creosote on chimney flue walls. Air supplies on fireplaces may be restricted by closed glass doors or by failure to open the damper wide enough to move heated smoke up the chimney rapidly (the longer the smoke's "residence time" in the flue, the more likely it is that creosote will form). A wood stove's air supply can be limited by closing down the stove damper or air inlets too soon and too much, and by improperly using the stovepipe damper to restrict air movement. Burning unseasoned wood – because so much energy is used initially just to drive off the water trapped in the cells of the logs– keeps the resulting smoke cooler, as it moves through the system, than if dried seasoned wood is used. In the case of wood stoves, fully packed loads of wood (that give large cool fires and 8 or 10 hour burn times) also contribute to creosote buildup. Cool flue temperatures speed creosote production, too. Condensation of the unburned byproducts of combustion occurs more rapidly in an exterior chimney, for example, than in a chimney that runs through the center of a house and exposes only the upper reaches of the flue to the elements.

Proper Maintenance

Clean chimneys don't catch fire. Make sure a CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep inspects your solid fuel venting system

annually, and cleans and repairs it whenever needed. Your sweep may have other maintenance recommendations depending on how you use your fireplace or stove. CSIA recommends that you call on certified chimney sweeps, since they are regularly tested on their understanding of the complexities of chimney and venting system. CSIA & Certified Chimney Sweeps

The Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) is a non-profit educational foundation that has established the only nationally recognized certification and accreditation program for chimney sweeps in the United States. The program was developed in keeping with the CSIA's commitment to the safety of chimney and venting systems and to the elimination of residential chimney fires, carbon monoxide intrusion and other chimney and vent-related safety hazards. The CSIA devotes its resources to educating the public, chimney service professionals and other fire prevention specialists, and the insurance industry about the prevention and correction of chimney and venting system hazards.

Ways to Keep the Fire You Want... from Starting One You Don't!

Chimney fires don't have to happen. Here are some ways to avoid them. Use seasoned woods only (dryness is more important than hard wood versus soft wood considerations. Build smaller, hotter fires that burn more completely and produce less smoke. Never burn cardboard boxes, wrapping paper, trash or Christmas trees; these can spark a chimney fire. Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures where wood stoves are in use, so you can adjust burning practices as needed. Inspect and clean catalytic combustors on a regular basis, where applicable.

What to Do if You Have a Chimney Fire

If you realize a chimney fire is occurring, follow these steps:

- Get everyone out of the house, including yourself.
- Call the fire department. If you can do so without risk to yourself, these additional steps may help save your home. Remember, however, that homes are replaceable, lives are not:
- Put a chimney fire extinguisher into the fireplace or wood stove. Close the glass doors on the fireplace. Close the inlets on the wood stove. Use a garden hose to spray down the roof (not the chimney) so the fire won't spread to the rest of the structure.

Once it's over, call a CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep to inspect for damage. Chimney fire damage and repair normally is covered by homeowner insurance policies.



DECEMBER, 2011

1	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
2	CHRISTMAS PARADE	
5	CITY COMMISSION	
6	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
6	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
12	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
13	BOARD OF REVIEW	8:00 A.M. CITY HALL
19	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
23	CITY HALL CLOSED	
26	CITY HALL CLOSED	
26	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
30	CITY HALL CLOSED	

JANUARY, 2012

2	CITY HALL CLOSED	
3	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
3	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
3	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
5	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
9	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
16	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
23	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

FEBRUARY, 2012

2	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
6	CITY COMMISSION	
7	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
13	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
14	WINTER 2011 TAXES DUE	
20	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
27	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
28	PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION	

MARCH, 2012

1	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
5	CITY COMMISSION	7 P.M. CITY HALL
6	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
6	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
12	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
19	CITY COMMISSION	7 P.M. CITY HALL
26	PLANNING COMMISSION	7 P.M. CITY HALL

APRIL, 2012

2	CITY COMMISSION	7 P.M. CITY HALL
3	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
3	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
5	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
6	CITY HALL CLOSED- GOOD FRIDAY	
9	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
16	CITY COMMISSION	7 P.M. CITY HALL
23	PLANNING COMMISSION	7 P.M. CITY HALL

CITY CONTACTS

Police & Fire Emergency.....	911
Fire Non-Emergency.....	694-4390
Police Non-Emergency.....	692-6111
Chief of Police.....	692-6111
City Manager	694-6146
City Clerk	692-3391
Finance Director	692-2741
Dept. Public Works	694-6636
Treatment Plant.....	694-9194

Website: www.cityofotsego.org

The Agenda is a quarterly publication of the
CITY OF OTSEGO

Tom Gilmer.....Mayor
Kathy Misner.....Mayor Pro-Tem
Stacy Rogers.....Commissioner
Molly Wieber.....Commissioner
Cyndi Trobeck.....Commissioner
Thad Beard.....City Manager
Angela Cronen.....City Clerk
David Dutton.....DPW Supervisor
Tom Dunn.....WWTP Superintendent
Gordon Konkle.....Chief of Police
Matthew Storbeck.....Treasurer
Chad Tackett.....Fire Chief

117 East Orleans Street
Otsego MI 49078
269-692-3391



Printed on Recycled Paper

HAPPY NEW YEAR