



City of Otsego Agenda

A Publication of the City of Otsego

Spring 2014



Lieutenant, Heather Nichols



Life Saving Awards Presented at the City Commission Meeting, Monday, March 3, 2014



Assistant Fire Chief, Kyle Baker

Congratulations to Lieutenant, Heather Nichols and Assistant Fire Chief, Kyle Baker who were presented with a Life Saving Award from Heather Miller of Plainwell Area Ambulance Service. Thank you to all of our Firefighters and EMS personnel for their dedicated service.

ELECTION NEWS

MAY 6, 2014

The polls will open at 7:00 a.m. and remain open until 8:00 p.m. **Tuesday, May 6, 2014**, for a Special School Election. Ballot wording will be available at City Hall.

NEW - If you wish to obtain an Absentee Voter Ballot, you will have to provide Photo ID when picking up the ballot at City Hall. Photo ID is not required if your Absentee Ballot is mailed to you.

Other 2014 Election Dates:
August 5, 2014 - Primary Election
November 4, 2014 - General Election



In order to expedite the process at the polls, please check prior to election day to make sure that you are a registered voter of the City of Otsego. **PLEASE HAVE YOUR PHOTO ID READY AT THE POLLS!**

You may call Angela Cronen, City Clerk, at 692-3391 to check on your voter registration status.

WINTER PARKING RULES REMAIN IN EFFECT



Parking is 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. Violators will be ticketed.

TRANSFER STATION COUPONS

Coupons will continue to be distributed during the months of March, April, and May. City residents will be entitled to dispose of one load of trash/rubbish (no larger than a pick-up truck can hold) free of charge. Household garbage is NOT accepted at the Transfer Station. Please remember, this service is for Otsego City Residents only. In order to take advantage of this service, pick up your coupon at City Hall when you pay your utility bill. One coupon will be issued per address, per year. City residents who do not pay their own water bills may bring proof of address within the City limits to City Hall to receive a coupon. The Transfer Station is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. For further details or questions, please call City Hall.

PLEASE DO NOT STOP RUNNING YOUR WATER WHEN TEMPERATURES RISE



PLEASE CALL City Hall before you stop running your water. We are having many services freeze up, because people are not continuing to keep their water running. Notification will be posted in the Shopper's Guide, on the City's Website & Facebook Page, when the City has cleared the need to run your water. If you see any discoloration, PLEASE start running your water immediately and contact City Hall. Your bill will not be credited unless you contact City Hall. Thank you for your cooperation.

City Hall Will Be Closed Friday, April 18 & Monday, May 26, 2014



City Manager
Thad Beard

City Manager's View

BUDGET TIME: As Spring approaches, far too slowly, it is time again for the City to work on the 2014-2015 budget. The budget is adopted in May, and takes effect July 1, each year. As

with the past several years, the City anticipates less revenue to work with to provide services to the local residents. The cost of fuel, natural gas and electric power continue to increase as does the cost of health insurance, but the revenue we receive from the State and in property taxes continues to decline. The result is an extremely difficult time in establishing a balanced budget. With the unusually brutal winter, we have been forced to "go over budget" to keep the roads clear, so we will be looking at using fund balance or reducing costs (services) from somewhere else.

DAM GRANTS: But for some good news, we are looking at the potential of two new revenue sources to assist with the removal of the City owned dam. The City, with the assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resource (MDNR) and the State

office of the Great Lakes, has submitted two grants to assist with the costs of removing the dam. The first potential source of funds is being sought from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, for an amount of \$1.5 Million. The second grant we submitted is from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for an amount just over \$2 Million. Both funding sources are to be used to restore the natural wildlife habitat which has been altered by the presence of the dam and the contaminated (PCB) sediments in the river. The revenue from the grants will enable us to install a Water Control Structure which will be used to reduce water levels while removing what remains of the City dam. Once the dam is removed, the control structure will remain in order to assist with the removal of the contaminated sediments which have been trapped behind the dam and rest along the river bottom. In the long term, we plan to restore recreation in the river and the ability for migratory fish to thrive in the river, making it much more of an asset to our community. If all goes well, we will see the water control structure in place by the November of this year, and the dam will be removed by this time next year.

Fire Department News



TIPS FOR CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) is urging all residents to have working smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors, as it is a serious threat in cold weather. Any fuel-burning appliances in the home, including furnaces and fire places, are potential CO sources.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING



- Schedule a yearly professional inspection of all fuel-burning home heating systems, including furnaces, boilers, fireplaces, woodstoves, water heaters, chimneys, flues and vents.
- Never operate a portable gasoline-powered generator in an enclosed space, or in your home.

- Keep portable generators as far away from your home and your neighbors' homes as possible, keep away from doors, windows or vents that could allow deadly carbon monoxide into their home.
- When purchasing a space heater, ask the salesperson whether the heater has a safety certification mark. These heaters have the most up-to-date safety features. An unvented gas space heater that meets current standards will shut off if oxygen levels fall too low.
- Do not use portable propane heaters indoors or in any confined space, unless they are designed specifically for indoor use. Always follow the manufacturer's directions for proper use.
- Never use gas or electric stoves to heat the home. They are not intended for that purpose and can pose a CO or hazard.

DON'T FORGET TO CHANGE YOUR BATTERIES IN YOUR SMOKE DETECTORS - MARCH 9TH



Step Forward Michigan Is Now Accepting Homeowner Applications for Loan Rescue Program

This program assists homeowners located in a participating county with past due property taxes using the Loan Rescue Program. If determined eligible, a one time payment will be sent directly to the county treasurer to pay toward outstanding county and local property taxes. Through Step Forward: MHA designed programs to help homeowners who have had a financial hardship. Learn more and find an online application at www.stepforwardmichigan.org.



HYDRANT FLUSHING TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (Due to the Weather Conditions)

The City of Otsego Water Department will flush all fire hydrants April 21 through May 2. This is done to remove any stale water that may be in the system and ensure that the fire hydrants are working properly. You may experience some reduced pressure and discoloration during this process. If discoloration occurs, let your water run until it clears. Please Note - Updates will be posted on our Facebook Page, the City's Website, and in the Shopper's Guide.

City Hall Welcomes New Employee Pamela Knowlton



Please say hello and welcome our new Accounts Receivable Specialist Pamela Knowlton! Pam started work with us on February 18 after a short retirement from the Allegan County Finance Department. A more than thirty year resident of Otsego, Pam is excited to have the opportunity to serve her community at the local level.

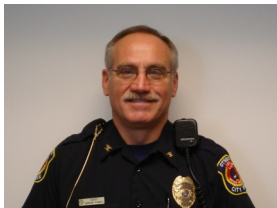
Otsego Main Street Website: otsegomainstreet.org
Visit the Otsego Main Street Facebook Page

City of Otsego Website: cityofotsego.org
Visit the City of Otsego on Facebook



GARAGE SALES

Don't forget to obtain your garage/yard sale permit before having a sale. Cost of the permit is \$1.00 and may be obtained at the City Clerk's Office. Each residence is permitted two sales per year with a maximum duration of three days each.



Police Chief, Gordon Konkle

POLICE BEAT

This morning before I began this article, someone told me that they thought they heard that we have received over 100 inches of snow this winter. Now I don't know if that is correct, but I do believe that it must be close. Maybe we are lucky and by the time you read this our "January thaw" (even though this is the middle of February) will have occurred and we can feel like we are living in Michigan again instead of Alaska. Well the good news is that even though we have been living and driving in more snow than most of us can remember our traffic accident rates have been remarkably low. I like to think that's because everyone is being careful, not just that everyone is staying inside because there is nowhere to go in this mess.

Seriously though, this time of year we examine our statistics on crime reports, traffic accidents, arrests, tickets, and our general calls for service. Lisa Rickli and Officer Steve Pegg do a wonderful job of collecting all that information and then Steve puts it into a format (nice little charts) that even I can understand. This year, as in the past, Steve made

the charts reflect ten years worth of information. As I review these charts some things remain pretty steady, while others surprised me. For a town which has a major highway running right through the middle of it, we have continued to experience a steady drop in the number of traffic accidents from a high of 120 accidents in 2004 to a low of 51 this last year. This bucks a trend for Allegan County, which has been identified for years as one of the most dangerous counties in the State of Michigan for traffic accidents. There are obviously many factors in our reduction of the number of accidents in the last ten years and by far most of those can be directly attributed to responsible drivers who have made safety a priority.

Other areas that are not really a surprise but I think are worth pointing out are crimes that the FBI tracks every year for the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) for the entire country. The crimes that the FBI believes are the most serious and necessary to track in order to get a true message of crime in an area are listed as Part #1 (violent) and Part #1 (non-violent) crimes. The Part #1 violent crimes would include forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assaults, and murder; where as Part #1 non-violent crimes are arson, burglaries, stolen cars, and larcenies. Of the over 4300 calls for service that our officers responded to, only 7

were classified as Part #1 violent crimes and 58 classified as Part #1 non-violent crimes. We of course responded to several other minor criminal, traffic, and ordinance violations, but the true snapshot of any community is shown in the number of these serious Part #1 crimes. Many social factors cause crime rates to increase and a low UCR Part #1 crime rate are indicative of a stable community that is normally one of the safest places in the country to live and raise a family. Just as I began this article talking about the safe driving habits exhibited so far this year, all of the other information I gave should really be no surprise to anyone living here either. Every community sets the tone through its values and expectations. No police department can force or dictate safe attitudes and responsibility on to the citizens they serve. We are merely a small part of community that we serve and I hope that we can continue to earn the trust and support that is already here and evident in the statistics and attitude of those who really count. I was told when I came here that Otsego was the best kept secret in the area. I don't know if it needs to be a secret, but I do understand why I was told that. With the community and school as a foundation, this is a great place to live and raise a family.

Otsego

MAIN STREET HAPPENINGS

MAIN STREET MICHIGAN

The snow and cold haven't kept Main Street volunteers down! They've had a busy winter executing the first annual O-Town Olympics, and planning events and programs for the next fiscal year (which begins July 1!)

What's in store for Otsego residents, you ask?? How about Movies on the Riverfront! Sidewalk Sales! A Beer/Wine tasting event! Seasonal Riverwalk Events! A grown up Science Fair! These are just a few projects

that we're looking at and working to develop. And YOUR help is always welcome!

Recently, area residents enjoyed a day of winter fun at our O-Town Olympics. If you missed it, you missed out! It was a perfect winter-weather-day. Chilly and snowy, but the sun was shining. Events included Hockey games for all ages, Human Dog Sled Races, Cardboard-Duct Tape Sled competition, kids carnival games, a bonfire, a concession stand and much more! The Otsego Historical Museum opened their doors as well, offering new exhibits and a place to warm up. We estimate that 400-



500 people participated in our Olympic events. The Ice Rink will continue to be open as long as the weather stays cold – so lace up and get out on the ice!

In addition to providing fun activities and entertainment for the community, Main Street has a focus on economic development. One avenue to economic health is through business support. During the month of February, we hosted a 4 week Technology Training to area business owners and employees. Participation was strong and the feedback we're receiving tells us it was valuable. We are planning to continue

offering free business training opportunities to our area business owners. **How can you help strengthen our local economy? Shop Local!** We need to train ourselves to think local before we run to the big box stores. So much of what we need is available right in our own downtown! Our promotions committee has developed a program that seeks to re-introduce you to your downtown businesses through Demo Days. On February 22nd, three downtown businesses offered demonstrations of their products and services. Bob's Hardware showed us how to re-wire a 3-way switch and cut tile. The Bow Be dazzler at the Bloomin' Shop (David) taught us the fine art of creating bows for all occasions. And Country Way Natural Foods educated us on loose leaf tea brewing, and ear candles. We hope you'll take advantage of these types of opportunities to get to know your local businesses better!



Did you know that the Otsego Main Street Website hosts a community calendar? We are encouraging all businesses and organizations to inform us of your events so that they can be added to our community calendar! Please visit our website and take a look around when you have a moment.



www.otsegomainstreet.org. Also, If you haven't **liked** our facebook page yet (Otsego Main Street), we encourage you to do so. It's not our only avenue of distributing information to you, but it is definitely our greatest opportunity. Thank you for supporting **Otsego Main Street, "where volunteers make it happen!"**

2014 Property Assessments

By, Matthew Storbeck, Finance Director

Property owners will receive their 2014 Assessment Notices during the first week of March. This notice will include the 2014 Assessed Value (AV), State Equalized Value (SEV), Taxable Value (TV) and classification for the property. AV is the amount the City Assessor calculates to be one-half of the fair market value of the property based upon construction, square footage and sales studies of similar properties. SEV is the State of Michigan's belief of one-half of the fair market value of the property after applying a factor to all properties within a class (residential, commercial, etc.). To my knowledge, the City has not ever received a factor from the State of Michigan.

Over the past year residential properties experienced an overall market value increase of 5.24 percent. Commercial properties, decreased in value 1.4 percent overall. Changes in market value affect both the AV and SEV. The 2013 Inflation Rate Multiplier is 1.6 percent, which will be used to calculate the change in TV. TV, the value that determines property taxes, cannot increase more than the inflation rate, as determined by the Michigan Department of Treasury, or 5 percent, whichever is less, until there is a change in ownership of the property.

Also, please examine the assessment notice to verify the Principle Residence Exemption (PRE). This value used to be called the "Homestead Exemption" but was often confused with the state income tax exemption referred to by the same name. The PRE percentage is that part of a property occupied by the owner. If the property is a multiple residence or combined with commercial, the PRE should be the percentage of the total square footage occupied by the owner as their residence. This PRE percentage reflects the amount the property is exempt from the 18 mill public school operating millage for 2014.

Protest to the Board of Review is necessary to protect your right to further appeals to the Michigan Tax Tribunal for valuation and exemption appeals and/or the State Tax Commission for classification appeals. Properties classified Commercial Real, Industrial Real or Developmental Real may be appealed to the regular March Board of Review or to the Michigan Tax Tribunal prior to May 31. Commercial Personal, Industrial Personal, or Utility Personal Property may be appealed to the regular March Board of Review or to the Michigan Tax Tribunal prior to May 31, if a personal property statement was filed with the local unit prior to the commencement of the Board of Review as provided by M.C.L. 211.19.

The Board of Review will meet Tuesday, March 11, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. until noon, and 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m., Thursday, March 13, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., and Saturday, March 15, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. until noon at the Otsego City Hall, 117 East Orleans Street, Otsego, Michigan. The Board will also meet Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. for organizational purposes only. Please call (269) 692-3391 to schedule an appointment. You may also mail your protest to City Hall, but they must be received by Friday, March 14, 2014.

CITY OF OTSEGO CALENDAR

MARCH, 2014

3	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
4	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
4	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
6	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
9	DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS	
10	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
17	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
24	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

APRIL, 2014

1	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
1	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
3	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
14	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
18	CITY HALL CLOSED	
21	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
28	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

MAY, 2014

1	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
5	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
6	ELECTION	CITY HALL
6	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
6	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
12	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
19	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
26	CITY HALL CLOSED	

JUNE, 2014

2	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
3	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
3	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
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

JULY, 2014

1	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
1	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
3	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
4	CITY HALL CLOSED	
7	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
14	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
21	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
28	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

AUGUST, 2014

4	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
5	ELECTION	CITY HALL
5	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
5	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
11	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
18	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
25	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

SEPTEMBER, 2014

1	CITY HALL CLOSED	
2	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
2	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
2	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
4	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
8	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
15	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
22	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 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
Main Street Office.....	692-2336
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
Matt Shankle.....	Commissioner
Ryan Wieber.....	Commissioner
Cyndi Trobeck.....	Commissioner
Thad Beard.....	City Manager
Angela Cronen.....	City Clerk
Mike Bosch.....	DPW Supervisor
Tom Dunn.....	WWTP Superintendent
Gordon Konkle.....	Chief of Police
Matthew Storbeck.....	Treasurer
Chad Tackett.....	Fire Chief
Kevin Harris.....	Assessor
Molly Wieber.....	Main Street Manager

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



Printed on Recycled Paper

