



# City of Otsego Agenda

A Publication of the City of Otsego

Winter 2014

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



**VISIT US ON THE  
WEB  
[CITYOFOTSEGO.ORG](http://CITYOFOTSEGO.ORG)**



**ALL DAY- Downtown Scavenger Hunt!** Pick up your instructions at any downtown business. Prizes if you complete the hunt and solve the puzzle!

**8 & 9am - Breakfast with Santa!** VFW. Limited Seating. Call to reserve! 692-2336

**10am to 12 pm - Kids Crafts!** Hosted by the Otsego Historical Museum

**11am to 12 pm - Guided Historic Walking Tour.** Meet at Museum

**11am & 12 pm - "Frozen" Lunch!** With Anna & Elsa. **SOLD OUT**

**12pm to 6pm - Christmas Craft Show.** Location is Otsego Historical Museum and Compass Wellness.

**1pm to 4 pm - Build a Gingerbread House!** Otsego Gourmet Goodies

## **THANK YOU - CHIEF TACKETT**

The City Commission presented Fire Chief Chad Tackett a Resolution thanking him for his many years of service on the Fire Department. Chad has been a member of the Fire Department since 1996. The City wishes Chad the best at his new position as Fire Chief of Texas Township. Thank you Chad for your service.



## **NEW FIRE CHIEF - BRANDON WEBER**

Congratulations to Brandon Weber who was appointed the Otsego Fire Department Chief. He has been on the Fire Department for 17 Years. He has many credentials and has held various offices within the Fire Department, the most recent being a Captain. Please help us welcome Chief Weber.



**3pm to 6pm - Chili Cook Off** at the Otsego Chamber of Commerce (Masonic Temple) Register at the Chamber of Commerce. 694-6880

**4pm -7:30pm - Hot Cocoa**, with MOUNDS of whipped cream! In front of the Chamber.

**5:00pm - Hayrides through town!** Hop on in front of Amish Oak Treasures.

**5:30pm - Visits with Santa**—Fire Station

**5:30pm - Chestnuts Roasted on an open fire** (Presented by the Otsego Chamber of Commerce.

**5:30pm - Musical Entertainment**—The Real Fantastics

**6:15pm - Tree Lighting Ceremony**

**7:00pm - Parade** (Presented by the Otsego Chamber)

**7:30pm - Visits with Santa** - Fire Station (Presented by the Otsego Chamber of Commerce)

**7:45pm - Lantern Launch** - Lanterns go on sale at 5:30 on every corner

## **BRING YOUR LIGHTERS!**

If you have questions, please call the Otsego Chamber or Otsego Main Street.



**DROP BOX LOCATED  
AT THE NORTHEAST  
CORNER OF CITY HALL**

**City Hall Will Be Closed  
December 24, 25, & 31, 2014, & January 1, 2015**

# City Manager's View



City Manager  
Thad Beard



**Charter Amendments:** Those who made it to the polls know that there were four (4) requested Charter Amendments to consider. All but one of the four (4) failed. The lone proposal to succeed was the proposal to require a simple majority (as opposed to 3/5) of the public to approve a bond request. This will allow us to bring the Charter language in line the State law. Since the other three amendments failed, they may not be placed on the ballot for consideration for two (2) years. The fourth proposal was an amendment authorizing the ability to increase the City Millage to 14 Mills (from 12.5 Mills). While this failed, I do anticipate the need to seek some other form of revenue in order to provide funds to cover the expenses associated with public safety. We have been unable to purchase a police vehicle for several years and a new one is necessary. The ladder fire truck has been out of service due to needed repairs and the City Commission had to authorize the use of Fund Balance to pay for the repairs because the General Fund could not cover the cost. The ability to provide public safety to the public is the most important service we provide. It is also, by far, the most expensive service we provide and is also one of the few services we provide which is funded solely from the General Fund. Thankfully, we have funds from the State and County (Act 51 Funds) that provide for street and sidewalk improve-

ments each year. But, those funds may not be used for police and fire services. We also have a separate Solid Waste Millage that provides funds to remove leaves each year, run the transfer station and pick up brush each month. But again, those funds may not be used to offset police and fire costs.

**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. While I knew this was significant, the significance was magnified when the Auditor indicated that we are the only one of fifty clients to receive an unqualified audit. I was pleased with the confirmation that the City maintains a health Fund Balance. We budgeted for the use of the Fund Balance to cover costs associated with our day to day services, and expected the Fund Balance to be reduced. However the reduction was only 1%, taking the General Fund Balance from 17% to 16%.

During the Holiday Season it is especially appropriate for me to share my thanks for all of the City employees. I am (we are) blessed with great employees who make Otsego a great place to work, play and ultimately stay.

Happy Holidays!

## TRANSFER STATION HOLIDAY HOURS

**CLOSED - Thurs., December 25, 2014**

**CLOSED- Thurs., January 1, 2015**

## REMINDERS

As Winter Returns -

PLEASE REMEMBER:

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



## 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.



### 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. Violators will be ticketed.



## 2014 DECEMBER BOARD OF REVIEW

The December Board of Review will be meeting on Tuesday, December 9, 2014, at 8:00 a.m. If you have a discrepancy regarding your Principal Residence Exemption on your Winter 2014 taxes, **you must contact City Hall before Friday, December 5, 2014.** If you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer's Office at 692-2741.

## 2014 Winter Taxes

Matthew Storbeck, City Treasurer

Winter tax bills were 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 5<sup>th</sup>, and an adjustment can be made for this year's taxes. Otherwise, corrections to the Winter Tax cannot be made until July of 2015.

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 26<sup>th</sup> or February 12<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://www.cityofotsego.org) to retrieve tax and payment information, as well as make electronic payments.



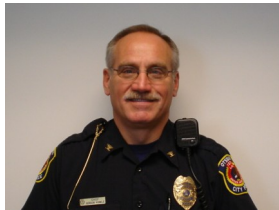
**SALE - 1/2 Priced**

**CITY LOTS FOR SALE**

**THINK SPRING!**

The City of Otsego has several lots remaining in the improved Eley Acres Residential Subdivision. Choice single family residential home sites are for sale in this restricted plat. Lot prices range from \$23,000 to \$37,000. For additional information please contact the City Clerk's Office, 692-3391.

## POLICE BEAT



*Police Chief, Gordon Konkle*

Here we go, winter is on us again! Now there are a lot of great things about winter, it's just getting use to it that is hard. So please, clean the snow and ice off your vehicles before attempting that drive to work or school. It is almost funny, if it weren't so dangerous, when I see people with a death grip on their steering wheel and their face straining trying to look out of the small hole in the snow they have cleaned off their windshield. I know that everyone runs late every now and then, but an accident if even minor, will really cause you to be late. So please take the time and clean off the windows so that you can see where you are going and what to avoid. It will also help to avoid an early morning conversation with me as I require you to stop and clean off your entire car in lieu of a ticket.

Speaking of tickets, remember that the winter "on street" parking ordinance is now in effect. This means that you can no longer park on any public street in the City from 2:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.

This parking ban will run until May 1<sup>st</sup>. We have been placing brightly colored warning notices on cars as a reminder. However, the weather has changed for the worse and snow removal makes it necessary that the streets remain free of parked cars so our DPW personnel can get our streets clean by the morning commute. Also remember that while no one likes getting a parking ticket, these tickets are much cheaper if paid within the 10-day grace period. After that time the cost doubles and if still ignored we have no choice but to send the ticket to the District Court where they will also add their own cost for processing. So save yourself some money and aggravation by taking care of any ticket you get within a reasonable time.

Recently the City has gone to great lengths completing sections of sidewalks to make it safer for those walking to school, the store, or for enjoyment. It's always hard to ask people to use the sidewalk when it is covered with several inches snow. So please be a good neighbor and clean off your sidewalk, and if you have an elderly or handicap neighbor it would be wonderful if you helped them too.

Finally with the holidays approaching you are going to be bombarded with public service messages about

drinking and driving (hey, at least the election commercials are over). There will be extra patrols out on the highways and streets looking for drunk drivers. The law involving the amount of alcohol you can consume has gone steadily down while the fines and costs if convicted have risen dramatically. Please make plans before you go out for a designated driver. Nobody makes good logical choices once they are intoxicated so don't count on you knowing when you have had enough. Just don't drive at all once you have had something to drink, it is the only sure fire way to be safe. We all laugh at the comedy sketches on TV about people being stopped after drinking and driving. Unfortunately, in real life we get to see how people over estimate how much they can drink and still drive. That bad decision has long lasting consequences that, believe me, are not very funny.

So please be careful and enjoy the holidays and the winter season.







# OTSEGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Prevent Cooking Fires

One of the leading causes of home fires is cooking related incidents and in nearly every case these fires were fully preventable. Cooking related fires are also the leading reason why people are injured by fire. These injuries usually consist of burns or smoke inhalation.

Traditionally, November and December are when most cooking fires occur and that's because of the extended holiday season.

### Leading causes Include:

- Grease or food caught on fire
- Faulty cooking equipment
- Combustible items placed too close to the stove

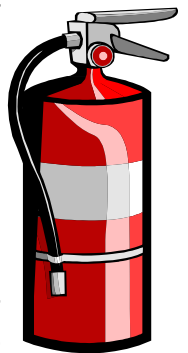


Most of these incidents involve cooking with

grease. When grease catches on fire, it burns hot and fast. If not under control quickly, it will spread and causes extensive damage.

The easiest way to put out a cooking fire is to shut off the burner and then place a pan lid or a non-combustible object (such as a cookie sheet, large pan or skillet) over the pan to cut off the oxygen supply. Leave it covered until the pan cools off. Taking the lid off too quickly may cause the fire to reignite. Throwing materials onto the pan such as salt, sugar, flour, baking soda or wet towels is too risky. This can spread the fire, which can also lead to injury.

Never throw water onto a grease fire. The water will fall to the bottom of the pan; quickly convert to steam and push all the flaming liquid into the air, spreading the fire. This can also lead to serious



## Otsego Main Street - Market Study

What does the future hold for downtown Otsego?

With an ongoing focus on downtown revitalization efforts, Otsego Main street has completed a 6 month, in-depth study designed to provide direction and recommendations for downtown business development and marketing strategies.

Here is a snap shot of what we learned. Retail expansion and recruitment targets capitalize and expand upon the downtown's retail sector strengths and traffic generated by existing businesses. Wide Spread survey results determined that examples of business types and merchandise lines showing potential for expansion and recruitment in Downtown Otsego include:

### ► Food Services and Drinking Places

- ◆ Full-Service Restaurants
- ◆ Limited-Service Eating Places
- ◆ Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)

### ► Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books and Music

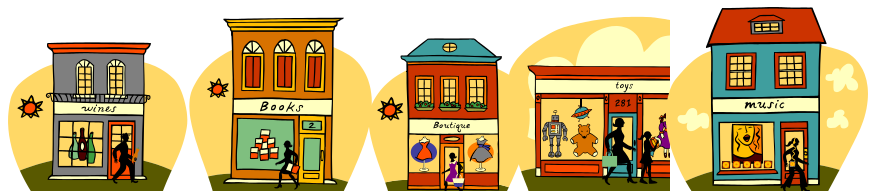
- ◆ Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instruments

- ◆ Book, Periodical and Music Stores

### ► Miscellaneous Store Retailers

- ◆ Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores
- ◆ Used Merchandise Stores
- ◆ Other Miscellaneous (Specialty) Store Retailers

Consumer survey results show relatively strong interest in potential downtown housing options. The findings could lend support for the rehabilitation of existing housing and the development of new, mixed-use concepts in Downtown Otsego and the surrounding area. Those indicating they would consider living in the downtown expressed interest in a variety of housing styles, and in both owner- and renter-occupied units including (in order of consumer priority) Apartments, Lofts, Condos, Townhouses and Senior Housing.



## 2014 Tax Year

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.).]

<b>TAXING UNIT</b>	<b>TOTAL RATE</b>	<b>BREAK- DOWN</b>	<b>NON-P.R.E. PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>	<b>P.R.E. PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>	<b>SUMMER BILLING</b>	<b>WINTER BILLING</b>
City	13.6949					
Operating		12.0854	21.2%	30.9%	12.0854	
Solid Waste Reduction		1.1995	2.1%	3.1%	1.1995	
Fire Truck Debt		0.4100	0.7%	1.0%	0.4100	
County	6.0937					
Operating		4.6377	8.1%	11.9%	4.6377	
Ops. VET Relief Fund		0.0200	0.0%	0.1%	0.0200	
Road Tax		1.0000	1.8%	2.6%		1.0000
Senior Service		0.4360	0.8%	1.1%		0.4360
Otsego Public Schools	25.5000					
Operating		18.0000	31.5%	EXEMPT		18.0000
2004 Debt		7.5000	13.1%	19.2%		7.5000
Allegan Co. Int. Schools	4.1217					
Operating		0.1157	0.2%	0.3%		0.1157
Voted Special Ed.		2.5297	4.4%	6.5%		2.5297
Voted Voc. Ed.		1.4763	2.6%	3.8%		1.4763
State Education Tax	6.0000		10.5%	15.3%	6.0000	
Otsego District Public Library	1.7088					
Operating		0.9888	1.7%	2.5%		0.9888
Debt		0.7200	1.3%	1.8%		0.7200
<b>TOTAL MILLAGE (NON-P.R.E.)</b>	57.1191		100.0%		24.3526	32.7665
LESS SCHOOL OPERATING FOR EXEMPT HOMESTEADS	-18.0000					-18.0000
<b>TOTAL MILLAGE (HOMESTEAD)</b>	39.1191			100.0%	24.3526	14.7665

# CITY OF OTSEGO CALENDAR

## DECEMBER, 2014

1	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
1	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	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
15	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
22	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
24 & 25	CITY HALL CLOSED	
31	CITY HALL CLOSED	

## JANUARY, 2015

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

## FEBRUARY, 2015

2	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
2	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	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
16	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
23	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

## MARCH, 2015

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

## APRIL, 2015

2	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
3	CITY HALL CLOSED	
6	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
6	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
7	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
13	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	7:30 A.M. CITY HALL
20	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
27	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

## MAY, 2015

4	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
4	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
18	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
25	CITY HALL CLOSED	

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

## 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](http://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
Brandon Weber.....	Fire Chief
Kevin Harris.....	Assessor
Molly Wieber.....	Main Street Manager

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