



City of Otsego Newsletter

A Publication of the City of Otsego

Spring/Summer 2024



CITY COMMISSION PETITIONS AVAILABLE

Petition forms are now available at the office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 117 E. Orleans St., for election to the Otsego City Commission. The City Election will be held Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Three City Commission seats will be open for election this fall.

The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected to four-year terms and the third candidate will be elected to a two-year term.

In order to qualify for the Office of City Commissioner, a candidate must be: A resident of the city for not less than one year immediately preceding his or her election and a Registered Voter.

Nominations for office are determined by petitions signed by not less than 40 registered voters of the City of Otsego. Petitions need to be submitted to the City Clerk's office no later than Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.



CITY OF OTSEGO ELECTION'S

August 6, 2024 & November 5, 2024

The polls will open at City Hall at 7:00 a.m. and remain open until 8:00 p.m.

Nine Day Early Voting at City Hall is from 8 am to 4pm

**July 27, 2024 through August 4, 2024 and
October 26, 2024 through November 3, 2024**

If you are not Registered to Vote, visit City Hall. Call the City Clerk if you want to verify your Voter Status!

**If you have any questions, contact the City Clerk,
Angela Cronen at 692-3391.**



HYDRANT FLUSHING SCHEDULE

The City of Otsego Water Department will flush all fire hydrants April 8—19. 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.

Coming Soon! Food Truck Monday!

Mark every Monday from **May through September** on your calendar for Food Truck Monday! Various food trucks will be parked by the Riverfront Pavilion from 4pm to 8pm (some vendors may set up early). Watch the City's Website and Facebook Page for Weekly Updates on times and food trucks. What a great way to spend some time outdoors with family, friends and neighbors! See you May 6th at the Pavilion.



CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED May 27, July 4, & Sept. 2, 2024

City Manager's View



City Manager
Aaron Mitchell

Elks Lodge RFP

The City of Otsego recently purchased the former Elk's Lodge located at 113 S. Farmer St. It was purchased for \$32K. That was the amount owed by the club for back taxes. The Otsego Elk's Club has gone defunct in recent years. It is unfortunately a sign of the times.

Many service-oriented fraternal order clubs are going under all across the country. I see 2 main reasons for why this is happening in municipalities of all sizes. One, there has been a societal shift from decades of the general population seeking out opportunities to serve others to a more internal focus. The second cause is the fact that the younger generations do not view memberships and associations as the levels of status indicator like prior generations. As a result, members of younger generations are not joining clubs like the Elks, the Lions, or the Moose. Leaving the only members being the senior members who are physically unable to participate and/or are passing away with no one left to fill the ranks. It is sad but true.

While the Elk's Club has gone defunct there remains the building that housed the Elk's Club for many decades. It is large and full of memories. The City took possession of it and is hoping to have it redeveloped and serve the community in some fashion going forward. As it currently stands, it is in need of some repairs. The 7,500+ sq. ft. building has been added on multiple times, making it not ideal for all building plans. With all of that in mind, there is still incredible value in the building when you consider the current costs of new construction. We are wanting to get the right builder/developer who has a vision for the future of this building and how it will serve the community.

To find them we have opened up a Request For Proposal (RFP) for the property.

The plan is to receive any and all plans or developmental options for the property by the May 23rd deadline. At that point, all serious and viable options will be considered by the City Commission.

If the City Commission wants to pursue an option they will enter into a developmental agreement with the applicant.

The hope is to avoid tearing the building down in the near future. Unfortunately, that will likely be the outcome of not having a viable alternative. We are also working on holding a sale of some kind for the contents of the building.

For those who have deep family ties to the building and the organization will have the opportunity to purchase items that may be available such as tables or chairs. This will be possible with a sale or auction to the general public in the coming months. This will help the City recover some of the costs of the purchase. For a copy of the RFP with details of application submission visit our website; www.cityofotsego.org



The Otsego Elk's Lodge

113 S. Farmer St.



The Pavilion by the Riverfront is available to rent. Rental information can be found on the City's website or call City Hall for details.

All of the City's Parks - Memorial, Northside and Brookside Park's Pavilions ***are not reservable*** and are available on a first come basis.

WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

UTILITY BILLING CLERK - DENISE MERLAU



Hello! My name is Denise Merlau and I am so grateful to be a part of the team that works here at Otsego City Hall. I'm working the front desk and since I like connecting with people (especially when really great coffee is involved), this job is especially enjoyable to me. While I am not from the charming town of Otsego, it's been a lot of fun to get to know a new place and hear what people love about this Greatest Small Town in Michigan. Thanks to some suggestions from coworkers and residents I'll be walking the Historical Home tour, I've found Moe's to have the best smoked BBQ and I'm looking forward to seeing what the Creative Arts Festival will be like. What else do you think I should add to my Otsego To-Do List? My favorite job at the City so far has been working the Election because I had nine days of early voting as well as Election Day to meet so many people. The Newsletter has been another fun way to get to know everyone. When I am not at work, I enjoy being at my home where I live down the road or around the corner from much of my family. I'm almost at the empty nest point and that is turning out to be an extra fun new stage of life. I spend a lot of time with my grown-up kids, I'm enjoying my youngest son's senior year of high school, and it's fun watching my new granddaughter grow up. I spend a lot of time out with friends, enjoy writing, reading books, listening to podcasts, heading out to concerts or enjoying campfires with my kids, walking trails with my very energetic dog, and I try to never miss homemade pizza at my parents' house on Sunday nights. I can't say it enough, I am grateful to be here at the City of Otsego and so thankful for this great group I get to work with.



DPW SPECIALIST - DAVID SELBY



It's not just a job he clocks into every day, for David Selby it's a point of pride for him to be the newest member of Otsego's DPW. Hired October of 2023, DPW Superintendent Mike Bosch remarked at the Commission meeting introducing David that not only is he a very hard worker, he is a great addition to the crew. Born and raised in Otsego, David is raising the next generation here in Otsego. He and his wife Maria keep busy with their elementary daughter Grettel who attends elementary school at Dix Street. David's favorite part of his job as DPW Technician is that there is always something different to work on, each day is something new on the job. "I like it, I like the people, they are good people and good supers," he commented. When David isn't at work and has some spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and farming. When this lifelong resident of Otsego was asked what his favorite part of the Greatest Small Town in Michigan was, he said it's the community, the small town feel and the nice people who live here. We're grateful to have David as part of Otsego's DPW.

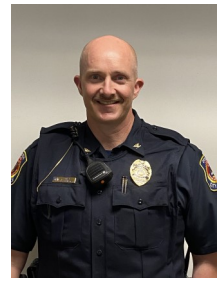
DPW SPECIALIST - ALBERTO (BERT) LOPEZ



Lifelong Otsego resident Alberto (Bert) Lopez was hired in June 2023 by the City's DPW. Well settled into his position as DPW Technician, Bert can't help but smile when he talks about his job. "It's great being part of the community and making it look good for people to come and enjoy," he shared about what he enjoys the most about his job. An avid outdoorsman, Bert enjoys that the job takes him on many outdoor projects. He and his wife, Marissa, are both heavily involved in the Otsego community. Some know Bert as Coach Lopez as he has been coaching Otsego's wrestling team for ten years and Marissa works with the Edward Jones office in Otsego. They were married in September 2022 and welcomed their sweet son, Waylon, to their family in January 2024. "It's great being a dad and experiencing all the new things," he said with a grin. "Bert is a very great addition to our DPW," shared Lisa Robar, the City's part-time DPW Technician. Bert is a graduate of Otsego, graduated from Western with a degree in financing, and is happy to be not only raising his family in Otsego but working for the City as well. In his spare time, he enjoys time with his family and loves to be outdoors as much as he can with his two German Shorthair Pointers, Cash and Willie. Be sure to welcome Bert to the City of Otsego!



POLICE DEPARTMENT



Director of Police & Fire, Brad Misner

SCAMS: As the world changes and evolves quickly, so does the level of scams, or so it seems. Scammers have figured out countless ways to cheat you out of your money over the phone. Some scammers will act friendly and helpful while others may threaten and try to scare you.

They will do what it takes to get your money and personal information. It is reported that in 2023, the total loss to phone scams in the USA was estimated to be \$39.5 billion. Crazy!

A few red flags to be aware of:

- * Being asked to pay money in order to receive a prize or get a job
- * Pressure to act immediately
- * Use of scare tactics, e.g. telling you a loved one is in danger, your computer has been hacked or threaten arrest
- * Receiving a check or overpayment then being asked to wire a portion of the funds back
- * Pressure to buy gift cards, and give the security code
- * Being asked to provide passwords, PINs, Social Security numbers, account numbers, or financial information to someone who contacts you out of the blue.
- * Telling you your bank account/credit cards have been compromised, and they need your information to fix the problem. Banks/Credit Unions do NOT call clients and ask those questions

Some common phone scams include:

- * **Impersonator** scams are where the scammer pretends to be someone from the FBI, local police/sheriff department, or court official and is trying to collect on a debt and will use fear tactics and threaten to send police if you don't pay immediately
- * **Prize / Lottery** scams are where the caller will claim you've won a prize but that you need to pay some sort of fee to get it.
- * **Tech Support** scams are where the caller will claim to be with Microsoft, Apple, or another tech company stating they received information that your computer has a virus
- * **Grandparent** scam is where the scammer is pretending to be a grandchild in trouble and needs you to send money immediately

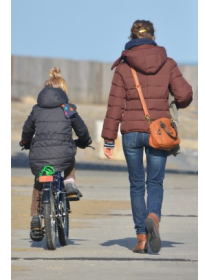
What should you do if you receive a scam call? Hang up! Don't give out any personal information. Many scammers will spoof local numbers to make you believe they are calling locally, this is not the case and should not be trusted.

What should you do if you fall for a scam? Scammers will often ask you to pay in a way that makes it hard for you to get your money back. Don't pay someone who insists you can only pay with a gift card, cryptocurrency, payment app, or wire transfer service. If you paid someone using one of the aforementioned methods, you need to act quickly and report it to the company or bank behind the gift card, cryptocurrency, payment app, or wire transfer service. Also, report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.



PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE/MOTORISTS

Recently the Otsego Police Department has received complaints about pedestrian foot traffic and bicycle traffic in our neighborhood streets. With the weather warming, and the snow disappearing, we are seeing many folks getting out and enjoying a walk or riding on their bicycle.



Please remember, we all share the roadway and need to be cognizant of each other. Here are a few things to consider while you are out walking, riding, and/or driving through your neighborhood.

Walking:

If a sidewalk is available, please use it.

Obey all traffic signals, signs, and markings just as if you were driving a car.

Cross the street at intersections or corners whenever possible.

Face traffic as you walk and stay as far left as possible if no sidewalk is available.

If you are walking side by side, move over as far left, and single file when traffic approaches you.

Do not stand in the roadway blocking normal traffic flow, stand on the side or sidewalk.

Bicycle:

Bicyclists must follow the flow of traffic, meaning do not ride against traffic.

You should not ride more than two abreast.

Riders must come to a complete stop at stop signs and traffic signals signaling red.

Cyclists are required to use hand/arm signals when turning and stopping.

Michigan law does not require a helmet, but it is recommended for your protection.

Motor Vehicles:

Vehicular traffic, including vehicles turning right or left, shall yield the right-of-way to other vehicles and to pedestrians and bicyclists lawfully within the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk at the time the signal is exhibited.

Michigan law requires a motorist to give at least 3 feet of room when passing a cyclist.

If we all look out for each other and take responsibility for our own actions, we can all enjoy this wonderful weather. Expect the other person does not see you, and take action to ensure you are following the laws here in this beautiful state.

Happy Spring Time from everyone here at the Otsego Police Department.





OTSEGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Director of Police & Fire, Brad Misner



Spring is rapidly arriving, pushing winter out the back door. Though it was a pretty quiet winter, the Otsego Fire Department has been hard at work with a few changes, training, and evaluations. Over the past few months, the prior Fire Chief, Brandon Weber, has retired after many years of service to the Otsego Community. The fine men and women here at OFD would like to thank Mr. Weber for his hard work, knowledge, and experience he brought to this department. Hopefully, retirement treats you well.

One big change made was how the department command structure is set up. We envisioned a department with a staff that all had a say in the positive direction we needed to go, had responsibilities assigned, and were accountable.

I've been given the task of leading these men and women moving forward. I've been the current Otsego Police Chief for a little over four years and have an extensive background in the fire service from the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. I'm now the Director of Police and Fire here in Otsego. My main goal is to provide the best service from both the Police department and the Fire department. That service comes in a way where we treat people with respect, dignity, and care they deserve. I'm proud to be a part of the Otsego Community and look forward to serving.

Extrication Equipment:



The Otsego Fire Department is currently in the middle of evaluating new extrication equipment.

You ask, what is extrication equipment?

Well, a common name for extrication equipment is "Jaws of Life." It is the tools fire personnel use to extricate (remove) injured individuals from their vehicles, normally involved in some sort of accident. Three tools specifically used are cutters, spreaders, and a ram. Cutters are used to cut metal or plastic so they can be moved out of the way of the injured person. Spreaders are exactly what the word says, they spread metal or plastic out of the way.

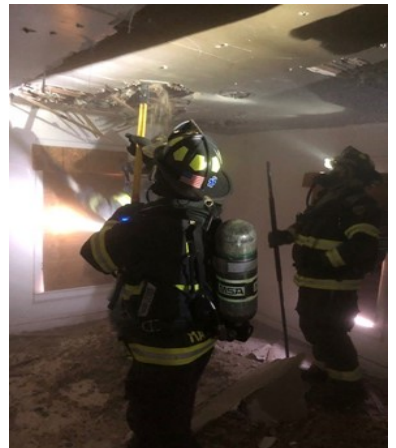
Fire personnel are then able to get to latches or locking mechanisms to cut them for removal. The ram is a tool used to push metal or plastic out of the way, like pushing a dash off a patient for removal.

We have invited four companies to come and demonstrate their products. Hurst, Holmaltro, TNT, and Genesis have allowed our firefighters to evaluate each product. Thanks to Brock's Towing for dropping off junk vehicles. It allowed real hands-on work where we were able to give each company an honest evaluation. One major upgrade OFD will have with a new set of extrication equipment will be battery-powered. Currently, the department has hydraulic tools, run off a pump, tethered to the fire engine that is over fifteen years old. The Otsego Fire Department will decide on which company to purchase from in the coming weeks.



Fire Training:

Over the past several weeks, the Otsego Fire Department has been able to train within an actual house thanks to the USG Otsego Paper Inc. USG has graciously allowed us to experience training evolutions using a house they own. OFD has conducted training scenarios in search and rescue operations, overhaul, firefighter survival, roof ventilation, garage door cutting, simulated fire attack, and ladder position and use. This type of training is invaluable. Normally, firefighters receive this training in the fire academy and then gain experience with real calls for service, but rarely are they able to train in an actual house. Who wants to see their house destroyed by a bunch of fire training? The training has been a great way to bond and grow as a team. OFD has some amazingly talented firefighters serving our community, and I'm super proud to be a part of their team.



Thank you for this opportunity, I do not take the responsibility lightly.

Have a great Spring!



OTSEGO CITY CLERK

City Clerk, Angela Cronen



This has been a very unique start to 2024 in the Clerk’s Office. I hope that you have heard through the many forms of communication that the Clerk’s Office has provided, some of the new changes that are now being put into effect from Proposition #2 of 2020. Here are a few highlights.

Nine Days of Early Voting – at City Hall from 8am to 4pm – beginning the second Saturday before a Federal or State Election (not Local Elections)

Permanent Absentee Ballots (a ballot will be sent to you for every election). A voter can sign up for a Permanent Ballot at the Clerk’s Office.

Elimination of the Mailing of Absentee Voting Applications—for every election, if you want to be sent a ballot you will need to sign up for the **Permanent Ballot List**. **Otherwise, after the 2024 election cycle (you will not be sent an application)** you will however be able to get an application on-line or from our office, but one will not be sent to you (like in years past).

Please call the clerks office if you have questions or email acronen@cityofotsego.org



IMPORTANT DATES

May 2024 – City Commission Packets available – 3 Open Seats in November – Check the City Clerk’s Page on the City’s website for details.

August 6, 2024 – Primary Election – Early Voting Begins July 27th

November 5, 2024 – General Election – Early Voting Begins October 26th

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Superintendent, Michael Bosch



The City of Otsego will be doing a complete reconstruction of Helen Ave. this summer. I am personally excited to see the Helen Ave. street project finally get underway. It has been 11 short years that I have been with the City of Otsego and every year this project has been on my wish list for rehab as I go through the budget process.

Various things have held it back during budgeting but it’s finally here.

The scope of the project will be a complete reconstruction of the road (Helen Ave) from Farmer St. to John St. (the former Rock-Tenn site) with new water, sanitary, and storm mains. Also, a new curb and sidewalk with a typical crown will be put back into the road. If you have driven it, the current road construction has an inverted crown where all the water drains to the center, definitely not ideal especially in Michigan. The project also includes a new sewer main

on Short St. up to River St. and a reconfiguring and construction of John St. to River St. Last but not least an extension of a water main on W. River St. from Catherine St. to the west City Limits.

With any major project, this one will come with its challenges. Access up and down the road will be limited throughout the summer.

The City’s Transfer Station will be able to be accessed but more than likely through the DPW parking lot most of the time. If you frequent the Transfer station please be considerate and watch for employee traffic.

We will do our best to work with everyone throughout the construction. I have personally talked to most of the residents and businesses along the way and reception of this project has been welcomed. I will be first in line to help answer questions during this project and also to aid in a remedy when things aren’t quite right we

are all humans and things are bound to not go as planned all the time and mistakes will occur.

I look forward to exciting things happening this summer in Otsego, not just for this project but throughout the City. Just a couple of teasers for you: There will be a new play structure built in Memorial Park and a new retaining wall put in at Brookside Park. Plus, the DPW will be still doing their best to keep up on road maintenance, micro seals and over band crack filling, and flowers to beautify the downtown and throughout the parks just to name a few.

The crew at the DPW are very talented, hard-working, and care deeply about the City of Otsego. I am personally grateful to be associated with each of them and am honored to lead them. I hope that everyone has a great summer and enjoys the Greatest Small Town in Michigan.



CITY OF OTSEGO NEWS

"The Greatest Small Town in Michigan!"



CITY OF OTSEGO WEBSITE

For up to date information regarding the City of Otsego, **OR to pay any utility bill or your tax bill**, visit our website at:

<https://www.cityofotsego.org>

The City also has a Facebook Page that you can follow for information. Public Notices are published in the Union Enterprise, as legally required. Please check our website regularly for updates. If you have any questions, please feel free to call City Hall at 692-3391; or email a Department Head.

[City of Otsego, Michigan | Facebook](#)



PLEASE SEE THE CITY'S FIREWORK ORDINANCE ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE.



DOOR TO DOOR SALES

Remember to make sure that the salesperson has a signed permit from the City. Just a reminder that the City is in no way endorsing any of the salespersons or their products by signing the permit. The signed permit only means that they filled out the proper paperwork and a background check has been completed, per the City's Ordinance. If you have a complaint - call the Police Department 692-6111, or City Hall 692-3391.

REMINDER

PLEASE **do not** flush **baby wipes, diapers, feminine products or flushable wipes** down your toilets!



These items are not really flushable. They do not break down like toilet paper is intended to do. They are beginning to be the cause of major problems and backups throughout the City. Please help yourself, your neighbors and community by not disposing of these items in this way. Please use your local refuse service to dispose of these items. Your cooperation in this would be greatly appreciated by everyone. Thank you.



RECYCLE PICK-UP IS THE FIRST AND THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH



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.

***Check the Shopper's Guide for the Free Garage Sale Days.*



Code of Ordinances

FRIENDLY REMINDERS - The City has many Ordinances that you might not be aware of, here are a few that may be of interest to you: Barking Dog Ordinance, a Tall Grass Ordinance, No Open Burning Ordinance, and Front Yard Parking Ordinance, to name just a few. Ordinances can be found in

detail on the City's website www.cityofotsego.org. **The City also asks now that mowing season is here to please not blow yard clippings into the road, as they can plug the street drains and increase pollution in the rivers.** Please feel free to contact City Hall if you have specific questions.

CITY OF OTSEGO CALENDAR

APRIL, 2024

1	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
2	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
2	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
4	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
15	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
16	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
22	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

MAY, 2024

2	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
6	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
7	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
7	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
20	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
21	CURBSIDE RECYCLE	
<u>27</u>	CITY HALL CLOSED - MEMORIAL DAY	
28	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 PM CITY HALL

JUNE, 2024

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	
17	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
18	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
24	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

JULY, 2024

1	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
2	CURBSIDE BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
2	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
<u>4</u>	CITY HALL CLOSED—INDEPENDENCE DAY	
8	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
15	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
16	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
22	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
27	NINE DAYS OF EARLY VOTING BEGINS	8:00 A.M. to 4 P.M.

AUGUST, 2024

1	CITY TRASH PICK-UP	
<u>4</u>	LAST DAY OF EARLY VOTING	8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
5	CITY COMMISSION	
6	CITY BRUSH PICK UP DAY	
<u>6</u>	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
<u>6</u>	STATE PRIMARY ELECTION	7:00 A.M to 8:00 P.M.
19	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
20	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
26	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

SEPTEMBER, 2024

<u>2</u>	CITY HALL CLOSED—LABOR DAY	
3	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
3	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
4	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
5	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
16	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
17	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
23	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



CITY OF OTSEGO

Stacey Withee.....	Mayor
Lauri Krueger.....	Mayor Pro-Tem
Wayne Rayburn.....	Commissioner
Chuck Moore Jr.....	Commissioner
Jason Smith.....	Commissioner
Aaron Mitchell.....	City Manager
Angela Cronen.....	City Clerk
Mike Bosch.....	DPW Supervisor
Luke Keyzer.....	WWTP Superintendent
Brad Misner.....	Director of Police & Fire
Matthew Storbeck.....	Treasurer
Lydia Paille.....	Assessor

117 East Orleans Street
Otsego MI 49078

CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED May 27, July 4, & Sept. 2, 2024