



City of Otsego Newsletter

A Publication of the City of Otsego

Spring/Summer 2025

We Are Planning For Success!

The City of Otsego has been hard at work planning for the future of our community. It would be reckless to make significant and at times expensive decisions without the proper planning. Much like many families do around the kitchen table when they are making financial decisions. They go back to and review their long-term and short-term plans before a decision is made. We have done something similar with the recent creation of our Master Plan and DNR Parks and Rec Plan. These will be reviewed before significant decisions are made. So, they hold a lot of importance for our community. Let me tell you a little about each.

Master Plan

The Master Plan is exactly as it sounds, it is the be all/end all in relation to City operations. It is expected to drive the development, operations and culture of the City of Otsego. Master Plans are required under State law and should be either reviewed or rewritten every 5 years. Our previous Master Plan expired in 2019, however the pandemic prevented an immediate update. We have begun the process to rewrite our plan in 2022. Since then our Planning Commission has been working hard at representing the community's wishes in relation to all things related to the City of Otsego for the next 5 years. We have also sent out multiple surveys to multiple different demographics across the community within the last 3 years to hear from you. That was vital information for us to clarify the community's preferences. We were blessed to have Lori Castello from Professional Code Inspections, who is a licensed planner walk us through each step of

the process. We are right at the end of the process with an upcoming Public Hearing to present a Draft copy of the plan. If you are interested in attending or reviewing a copy of the draft keep an eye out for our meeting agendas.

DNR Parks and Recreation Plan

The City of Otsego in coordination with Wightman Engineering has recently updated our DNR Parks and Recreation Plan. Even more importantly, it was recently approved by the DNR! This means that we will have an active Plan for the next 5 years. Not only is it a wealth of information on what the park system offers our residents and visitors, but it also goes into detail for what we strive for them to become in the not so distant future. The most important reason for us to have an active Parks and Recreation Plan is that it allows for the City of Otsego to apply for significant grants through the DNR Trust Fund. We have already submitted our 1st application for a new bathroom/ changing room building to be located at Riverfront Park. The public participation process of the Plan demonstrated that a bathroom building with changing rooms were one of the biggest needs for our park system. Along with a series of updated playground structures, which we intend to apply for in the coming years. DNR Trust Fund grant awards can be as large as \$400K. We will not know the success of the application until the end of 2025. In the meantime, get out there and enjoy our great parks!



HYDRANT FLUSHING

SCHEDULE

The City of Otsego Water Department will flush all fire hydrants April 28 - May 8. 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.

SPECIAL ELECTION

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025

Polls will be open 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Please contact the City Clerk, Angela Cronen, if you have any questions.



The Pavilion by the Riverfront is available to rent. Rental information can be found on the City's website www.cityofotsego.org 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.

CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED May 26, July 3, & Sept. 1, 2025

City Manager's View



City Manager
Aaron Mitchell

Internet Fiber in the City of Otsego

Most of you are probably already aware of the fact that internet companies are pretty busy in the City and surrounding area. Any communication or utility company must stay within the public right-of-way (ROW), unless they are given deeded access to private property with an easement. Meaning that they will not be allowed to be on your property without your permission. *If you need clarification on the difference between the ROW and personal property; please call City Hall.* It should be understood that we are looking at 2 separate installation projects and each will have a different effect on our residents. I will try to fill you in on some of the details of the 2 projects along with their differences.

123.NET

The work that has already been completed in the recent months was done by 123.NET. This work was part of a much larger project. A few years back the Allegan County Board of Commissioners leveraged a portion of their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) revenues in coordination with the statewide Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Plan grant to provide high speed internet across all of Allegan County. BEAD is a program that benefitted many communities across the State of Michigan. Availability of high-speed internet has long been a problem for many of Allegan's rural townships. 123.NET was awarded that significant project. Their work in the City of Otsego was to connect their existing network that exists in the neighboring townships and not seek customers in the City. This was a requirement for the contract, considering the fact that City residents already have a high-speed option. While they are not currently providing services to residents; the City of Otsego believes that we will rise or fall as a community and as a county. The benefits received by those around us will in turn assist our residents going forward. 123.NET's work

related to this project has now been completed within the City of Otsego.

Surf Internet

Surf Internet is approaching the installation a little differently. It is demand driven. They are working completely independently with a goal of providing service to as many customers as possible, whether they have a high-speed option or not. Which is what we all want to hear! They have 3 phases in their work within the City of Otsego. They are working east to west and are not working exclusively within the City of Otsego, so you will see that they are also hooking up township residents as well. Phase 1 consists of the Eley Acres neighborhood which began in March. They are hoping to get customers signed up within 2 months after construction commences. Surf Internet is committed to working with property owners to understand location of utilities, which will help assure for a smooth project. For those who will be affected will have letters sent to them ahead of the install from Surf. While Surf Internet may be a new name to us, they have aggressively been installing fiber across many communities through southwest Michigan. I have heard wonderful reviews from those projects.

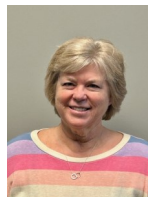
Both of these companies have been permitted to work within the City of Otsego through the Metro Act. They will be responsible for restoration of all work they have done in the ROW. Restoration includes putting the property back to how they found it. This will include bringing in clean dirt if needed and planting quality grass seed over any disturbed areas. Due to weather restrictions, this will not be finalized until later in the spring. If you notice any issues with your utilities after they worked in front of your house, please notify the utility owner. They are responsible for repairs of any damages they and their equipment cause.



**FREE GARAGE
SALE DAYS**

MAY 15, 16, & 17, 2025

AUGUST 7, 8, & 9, 2025



City Clerk,
Angela Cronen

2025 Elections - If you are on the Permanent Ballot List you will be receiving your Ballot around the beginning of April. The Clerk's Office will no longer be sending out Absentee Voter Applications. If you would like an Absentee Ballot, and are not on the Permanent Ballot List, please fill out an application on-line or they are available at the Clerk's Office. Contact the Clerk's Office at 269-692-3391 or email the Clerk at acronen@cityofotsego.org, if you have any questions.

Information about obtaining an

**ABSENTEE
BALLOT**





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, 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.



OTSEGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Director of Police & Fire, Brad Misner



Greetings from the Otsego Fire Department!

As we welcome the bright and beautiful spring season, we would like to take a moment to update you on all that has been happening at your local fire department. From exciting apparatus news to important safety reminders, here's a look at what's going on this spring.

A Message from Our Director of Police and Fire

Spring is a time of renewal, and as we embark on a new season, the Otsego Fire Department continues to be committed to serving and protecting our community. We've been busy with training, maintaining our equipment, and planning for upcoming events that bring us closer to the residents we serve. We are grateful for your ongoing support and partnership in making Otsego a safe place to live and work.

Thank you for your continued trust in our team. We look forward to an exciting and safe spring together.

- **Director Brad Misner**

Fire Safety Tips for Spring

As we head into the warmer months, there are several fire safety tips to keep in mind:

1. **Check Your Grill:** Spring means barbecue season! Before firing up the grill, make sure it's clean and free of grease buildup. Always keep your grill away from structures and overhanging branches.
 2. **Spring Cleaning:** When doing your spring cleaning, remember to check smoke alarms and replace the batteries if needed. A working smoke detector can save lives in the event of a fire.
 3. **Lawn Care:** If you're using lawn equipment, ensure that it is properly maintained and that gasoline is stored away from heat sources. Also, be mindful of dry grass and brush—fire can spread quickly in dry conditions.
 4. **Wildfire Awareness:** As the weather gets warmer, the risk of wildfires can increase. Make sure your property is clear of debris, and if you live near wooded areas, create defensible space by trimming trees and brush.
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Cadet Spotlight

This spring, we are proud to highlight Isabella “Bella” Bailey, one of our Cadets, who has been with the Otsego Fire Department this year through the Otsego High School Vo-tech program. Bella has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to both academic achievement and hands-on training. She consistently exhibits qualities of discipline, teamwork, and resilience, which are essential to the success of a firefighter.

Bella has shown strong leadership potential. She often takes initiative in group activities and has become more of a team member than a cadet. Bella displays excellent communication skills, both when working with peers and interacting with the instructors. This ability to engage effectively with others will undoubtedly serve her well as she advances in the firefighting profession. Please congratulate Bella for completing the Cadet program. We look forward to watching her grow within the profession and hopefully the Otsego Fire Department.

Thank you, Bella, you have done an amazing job this year!





OTSEGO FIRE DEPARTMENT CONT.

Apparatus update

The apparatus planning committee, made up of several stakeholders in the community, have decided to sell our Heavy Rescue. This apparatus was generally used for accidents, technical rescues, water rescues, and housing our air bank, along with the extrication equipment. This move will save on maintenance costs.

We plan to purchase two separate enclosed trailers to house the equipment. The medical license attached to the Heavy Rescue has been moved to the first due engine. The extrication equipment has also been reestablished on the engine as well. The thought was to have additional resources on scene of a major accident, like available water. We are in the initial research stages for enclosed trailers.

If you have any questions or thoughts, please reach out to me so we can discuss the project.

How You Can Help

The Otsego Fire Department relies on community support to ensure we can continue to provide the best service to our residents. Here are some ways you can help:

- **Become a Paid On-Call Firefighter:** We're always looking for passionate, dedicated individuals to join our team. If you're interested in joining, please contact our department for more details on the application process.
 - **Donate:** We accept monetary donations to support equipment, training, and outreach programs. Your donations help us continue providing high-quality service.
 - **Stay Informed:** Follow us on social media for the latest updates, fire safety tips, and event announcements. Engaging with us online helps us reach more people with vital safety information.
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POLICE DEPARTMENT

Look who's back in town, Emma Hoffman! One of Otsego's very own has joined Otsego Police Department as the newest member of the team, however, she is no stranger to law enforcement having spent the last 3 years with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department.



Emma was born and raised in Otsego and graduated from Otsego High School, Class of 2016. She has been enlisted for the past 9 yrs. with the Army National Guard and in her spare time enjoys riding one of her many horses, scuba diving, riding her motorcycle, baking, being outdoors and planning her May wedding.

When Emma was asked how she felt about being a police officer in her hometown, she couldn't help but smile and said, "I'm excited to be back and to give back." Please help us in welcoming Emma back to town and to our department.

In other department news, after 19 yrs. of service (part-time & full-time), Officer Mike Gudith will be resigning from his position as a police officer and change career paths. We would like to thank Mike for his many years of dedication and service to the residents of the City of Otsego and wish him well in his new endeavors. If you see Mike, please thank him for his many years of commitment to this community.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT NEWS

2025 will be a year of change for the Otsego City Finance Department. Long-time Finance Director Matthew Storbeck retired in December 2024 after 36 years of service to the citizens of the City of Otsego.

Brian Kelley has taken over the role of Finance Director, bringing his 27 years of local government work experiences. He served three different roles, including Deputy Treasurer, during his 14+ years at the City of Portage. He worked over 12 years for the City of Plainwell as Finance Director. Brian brings his accounting, property tax, utility billing and election-related experiences to Otsego to seamlessly serve our citizens after Matthew Storbeck's retirement.

In February 2025, long-time employee Lura Holden was promoted to Deputy Finance Director and continues to work with the team to provide the best customer service and work efficiencies to the City Hall workflow.

Your Finance Department will continue to manage city funds in compliance with city policy and all legal requirements. We strive to minimize costs and maximize safety and transparency. Summer 2025 property tax statements will be issued on July 1, 2025 and will be due at City Hall on August 18, 2025. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Superintendent, Michael Bosch



The City of Otsego and its maintenance crews will again have a very busy summer. Just a few highlights from the Department of Public Works; crack filling on city streets, manhole and catch basin repairs, minor upgrades to parks, sidewalk repairs and replacements are just to name a few. There will be minor delays while street and manhole repairs are done, so please be patient with the crews for yours and their safety.



The Water Department will be having a very busy summer, as well, with new fire hydrant replacements, water service repairs and replacements, a valve turning program and a multitude of MISS DIGS from the new fiber optics that will be constructed throughout the City of Otsego. (For more information on this please see City Manager Mitchell's article).

And last but not least, the Waste Water Treatment Plant operators will be working on some upgrades to the plant as well as making sure flows and testing run smoothly every day. They will also be partnering with our engineers on a new Asset Management Plan (AMP) which will be able to help the City plan for major upgrades over the next 20 years on

an aging treatment plant and infrastructure. All things are currently going well, but as Benjamin Franklin once quoted "if you fail to plan you are planning to fail". In the treatment plant world that is unacceptable.

I would also like to give a huge thank you to our residents, especially those living and working on Helen Avenue, for the patience and understanding you had with us last year as we reconstructed Helen Street. If you haven't been down there, you should really drive it once, just to see how nice it has become. There are just a few minor punch list things to work on this spring and it will be complete. I fully understand the issues it meant for even using the transfer station and its leaf and brush drop off site. It is now fully up and running again! The City of Otsego is truly blessed to have this site in your City. If you talk to a member from a neighboring community most will surely say that they wish they had something like it for their own use.

If there is ever any questions about operations, feel free to reach out to me, and I would be happy to sit down and discuss any of these topics with you. I hope you all have great summer and thanks for making Otsego the greatest small town in Michigan.



CITY OF OTSEGO



117 E. Orleans Street
Otsego, MI 49078

269-692-3391
269-692-2643 (F)

WWW.CITYOFOTSEGO.ORG

INFORMATION SHEET

Population

4120

City Hall Office Hours

Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m.— 5:30 p.m.

City Commission Meetings

First and Third Monday of each month, 7 p.m. at City Hall

Transfer Station/Recycling Center

Open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 9 a.m.—11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m.—3:45 p.m.
There is a charge for the Transfer Station, but no charge for recycling.

Monthly Curbside Brush Pickup

First Tuesday of each month. Loose brush only. No large limbs, leaves or grass clippings.

Monthly Curbside Trash Pickup

First Thursday of each month. Place trash on curb lawn the night **before** the pickup. Items which **won't** be picked up are garbage, furniture, appliances, construction materials, carpeting and hazardous waste. Limit is **3** bags or boxes.

Monthly Curbside Recycle Pickup

First and Third Tuesday of each month. Resident **must** have a Best Way Recycle Cart.
Contact Best Way Disposal to request cart at 1-800-950-5519.

Yearly Leaf Pickup

Normally in November. Watch local newspapers and social media for details.

Winter Parking Rules

Local ordinance **prohibits** parking on any City street between the hours of 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. from November through April. Parking is also prohibited across city sidewalks. Information on other parking restrictions available at City Hall or on our Website.

Water and Sewer Service

Bills for water and sewer service are mailed quarterly on the first of the month and are due by the 16th of the same month. A ten percent penalty is assessed after the 16th.
To report water or sewer problems please contact City Hall. For problems after hours or on weekends, call 269-692-6111. The water system is flushed bi-annually. Notices will be published.

Permits Required

Permits are required for the following: Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, Fencing, Garage Sales, Transient Merchant and Signs.

CITY OF OTSEGO CALENDAR

APRIL, 2025

1	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
1	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
3	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
7	CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
15	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
21	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
28	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

MAY, 2025

1	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
5	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
6	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
6	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
6	SPECIAL SCHOOL ELECTION	CITY HALL 7AM to 8PM
19	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
20	CURBSIDE RECYCLE	
26	CITY HALL CLOSED - MEMORIAL DAY	
27	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 PM CITY HALL

JUNE, 2025

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

JULY, 2025

1	CURBSIDE BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
1	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
3	CITY HALL CLOSED—INDEPENDENCE DAY	
7	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
10	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
12	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
15	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
28	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

AUGUST, 2025

4	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
5	CITY BRUSH PICK UP DAY	
5	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
7	CITY TRASH PICK-UP	
18	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
19	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
25	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

SEPTEMBER, 2025

1	CITY HALL CLOSED—LABOR DAY	
2	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
2	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
2	CURBSIDE RECYCLING 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

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.....	Director of Public Works
Brad Misner.....	Director of Police & Fire
Brian Kelley....	Finance Director/Treasurer
Lydia Paille.....	Assessor

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

CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED May 26, July 3, & Sept. 1, 2025