City of Otsego Newsletter

A Publication of the City of Otsego Fall/Winter 2025

NORTHSIDE PARK FIRE

As many of you know we experienced a horrible act of violence on the early hours of September 2nd with the intentional act of setting the Northside Park playground ablaze. While OFD was able to get the fire out quickly, a 20'x 40' section of the playground was destroyed in the blaze. It was a significant community-wide loss. So many generations of kids have played on that playground. The playground was 30 years old and you may remember that it was assembled by community volunteers after the equipment was donated by Menasha in the 90s. When the community saw the damage, heartbreak was felt all across the City. The good news is that with the quick work from the DPW, we got the playground secured with the damaged portions removed and were able to open it back up in less than 60 hours! Going forward the plans are to meet with consultants over the winter months on finding the best contractor for the work in the spring of 2026. The plan is to do our best to replicate the missing portion that was damaged the best we can. We have insurance proceeds for $45K. We are hoping that will be enough, but we are expecting for it to be a little higher. We will know more as we discuss more of the details with the contractors in the coming months. We have already received requests for donations from private residents if needed. That will be considered as we move forward with the replacement. On a positive note, we can thankfully state that arson charges have been pressed on the suspect that OPD has identified from the evidence gathered from their investigation. To track those criminal proceedings watch for the news headlines throughout 2026.

FALL LEAF PICK-UP

As the end of summer draws near, it is once again time to think about our annual FALL LEAF PICK-UP.

Dates for the pick-up are the following:

1st Round - October 27 – Oct. 30
****Farmer & Allegan St. (M-89) - Oct 30**

2nd Round - Nov. 10 - Nov. 13
****Farmer & Allegan St. (M-89) - Nov. 13**

*****PLEASE NOTE THAT RANDOM PICKUPS MAY OCCUR BEFORE AND BETWEEN SCHEDULED PICKUPS.***

*****Please do not put the leaves out before October 25th.***

Watch for additional announcements on the City's Website, in the "Shoppers Guide", and Facebook.

The City's policy is to canvass all streets at least twice during the two week pick-up period. If the leaves are not in the street they will not be picked up. *REMEMBER: With the exception of Allegan Street & Farmer Street, all leaves are to be raked into the street next to the curb.* FINAL ROUND OF PICK-UP WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE STREET SWEEPER. Once the Street Sweeper has passed pick-up is complete.

Please do not place anything *except* leaves in the street. The City places these leaves on a compost pile and therefore, branches, twigs and other yard waste must not be included. Brush and other yard waste may be taken to the City's Transfer Station free of charge. It is the City's policy to canvass the City two times. If leaves are placed in the street after completion of the canvassing, they will not be removed. It is the resident's responsibility to dispose of the leaves at the Transfer Station.

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 restricted during the months of November through April in order to facilitate snow removal. Violators will be ticketed.

CYNDI TROBECK COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Congratulations Jason Smith - Jason has earned this award by his endless dedication to the Otsego community. Jason serves in many roles; pastor, commissioner, Rotary and TOP board member and volunteers for many projects.

Cyndi played a pivotal role in getting Jason engaged and would be ecstatic with this choice. Jason, thank you for all that you do.

City Manager
Aaron Mitchell

CITY MANAGER'S VIEW

HOW IT'S DONE IN THE CITY OF OTSEGO - As you probably already know, much of the operations of a local government are based on customer service. When you look at a city's budget you will notice a majority of the costs are dedicated to manpower. No matter what the problem is, it will likely come down to a city employee solving it in some fashion. This was on full display during the pandemic when our essential employees and department heads worked in the office everyday (with the appropriate distancing from each other of course). No more talk of the pandemic, that was not fun for any of us. But, it should be understood that local government is based on customer service. And we take it pretty seriously here in Otsego.

In order to work for the City of Otsego you must understand the level of excellence of public service that we provide our residents. And the expectation to go above and beyond what other municipalities traditionally offer. The Otsego standard is not only being responsive to residents' expected requests but also going the extra mile to provide some additional services that you may not find anywhere else. We want to demonstrate why we are "The Greatest Small Towns in Michigan!" When you think of City of Otsego employees; I want you to think of quality public service and have a smile on your face from a memory of a positive interaction you previously had with a City employee when they went above and beyond your expectations. I have heard multiple anecdotes from many of you already, which obviously makes me happy and confident that we are on the right track. There are some services that you may not be aware that we offer our residents. Many of these services are intended to help residents when they are rather vulnerable. We want to earn your trust in hopes that you would be comfortable reaching out to us and allowing us to help in your hour of need. Some of those extra services include:

- House Checks- If you are going on vacation or just plan on leaving your property for a couple of days and would like for the Otsego Police Department to keep an eye on it; we can do that. We will put your property on a list for all patrolling officers to keep an eye out for suspicious activity until you return.

- Smoke Alarm Checks- If you have questions about your smoke alarm and are wanting confirmation that your smoke alarms are working properly; call the Otsego Fire Department.

- Utility Questions- Some residents are often concerned about their water usage or quality. We will do our best to assist wherever possible. If you are unaware of where your water and/or sewer line is located, we can help you out. If you are having an interruption of service; a water or sewer department employee could also attempt to explain what repairs would be needed and a ball park cost estimate. We recently heard of a story of a property owner being taken advantage of by being overcharged. We don't want that to happen. We cannot do the work on private property, but we will help you as much as we can to make sure you are not being taken advantage of.

- Transfer Station- Almost everyone is aware of the traditional transfer station services. However, I think many would be surprised to know that the yard waste lot is accessible 24/7 to drop off any brush or lawn clippings that you may have.

- Lost Dog- If your dog gets out and your family is getting anxious about finding them, call the Otsego Police Department. OPD will not be solely searching for "Fido", but they will be able to keep an eye out for them and return them if they find them while on patrol.

- Property Pin Location- While we cannot offer any specific survey interpretation or advice. We can assist in the location of the buried property pins that border our City ROW with a metal detector. This can be helpful to better understand property boundaries for a fence or building permit.

- Block Parties- No keggers, sorry. But, a potluck is allowed. If your neighborhood would like to close off a portion of the street to enjoy each other's company for an afternoon, we can make that happen. We have a couple of annual block parties that we close the street for. If that is something that interests you; stop by City Hall and get more information.

- Availability- If needed, our department heads and myself are available to respond to any questions or concerns that you may have. Whether that is stopping by, emailing or even scheduling a meeting if the problem needs it. At the end of the day, community leaders must be accessible and we will make any reasonable accommodations to be available for our residents. Our doors are always open.

We feel like the City of Otsego is different than other small towns. We want to be "the" standard for excellent public service. If there is a service that we are missing and that you feel like we could provide the community, please bring it to our attention.

OTSEGO POLICE DEPT.

Director of Police & Fire, Brad Misner

Safe Driving Habits

Fall and Winter seasons upon us, it's crucial to drive cautiously in the fall due to the reduced visibility from increased rain, fog, and shorter daylight hours. The increased precipitation causes decreased traction from slick conditions, things like wet leaves, frost and rain are contributing factors. These factors create significantly higher risks for accidents. By following a few suggestions, you will increase your chances of avoiding any problems.

1. Slow down your speed when road conditions are wet/icy.
2. Increase the distance between you and the vehicle you are following.
3. Ensure your lights are on and in working condition during dawn, dusk, and nighttime hours.
4. Check your vehicle – ensure your wipers are in good working condition, and your tires have proper tread and pressure.

School Buses and Students

In Michigan, you must stop at least 20 feet away from a school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm extended. You must remain stopped until the lights are off and it's safe to proceed. You are required to stop from the front or back of a school bus. Drivers may proceed only after the school bus resumes motion or the flashing red lights are turned off.

- Failing to stop for a school bus is a civil infraction.
- Penalties include a civil fine, costs, and/or community service.
- Points can be added to your driving record.
- The fine can be doubled if this occurs in a school zone.

Halloween Safety Tips

The City of Otsego will celebrate Halloween on Friday, October 31st this year. Trails for Treaters will be held in the downtown area from 4pm-6pm on that same day. This brings a large amount of people into our city for the festivities. The Otsego Police Department and the Otsego Fire Department will be on hand to keep patrons safe as they cross M-89. You can help keep you family safe during this event by:

Trick-or-Treaters and Parents:

1. Stay Visible – Wear bright, reflective costumes or carry glow sticks/flashlights, apply reflective tape to costumes and candy bags.
2. Use Safe Costume Gear – Chose costumes that fit well and don't cause tripping. Avoid masks that block vision, maybe even opt for face paint over a mask.
3. Stick to Sidewalks & Crosswalks – Always walk on the sidewalk when it's provided. Cross at corners and crosswalks. Never dart out between vehicles.
4. Travel in Groups – Children under 12 should be accompanied by an adult. Older kids should stick to a group and follow a pre-planned route.
5. Check Candy Before Eating – Examine all treats for signs of tampering or choking hazards. Avoid homemade items from strangers.

Homeowners:

1. Light Up Walkways – Keep porches, paths, and yards well-lit and clear of obstacles. Use battery powered lights instead of open flames in decorations.
2. Pet Safety – Keep pets secured to prevent them from being startled or escaping.

Overall Safety Tip

If you see something suspicious, say something. Report unsafe behavior to the Police.

Public Safety Reminder

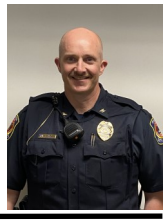
Please lock your vehicles and take your valuables inside your home. We are out patrolling the neighborhoods, but a simple act of locking your car doors and taking valuables inside definitely deters unwanted theft.

We look forward to seeing you outside!!

Director Brad Misner

OTSEGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Director of Police & Fire, Brad Misner



This summer has been a busy one for sure, the Otsego Fire Department has responded to over 1,000 calls for service as of this publication, which is about 100 over last year's totals. Our firefighters are true heroes in every sense of the word. Day in and day out, they put their lives on the line to protect our community—responding to emergencies, fighting fires, and educating the public on safety. Their dedication, courage, and selfless service make a lasting impact, and I'm incredibly grateful for the hard work they do to keep this community safe.

October is National Fire Prevention Month; an annual observance established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to raise awareness and educate the public about fire safety. The Otsego Fire Department has teamed up with the Michigan S.A.F.E. (Smoke Alarms For Everyone) program and Mi-Prevention. The goal is to protect Michigan citizens by providing smoke alarms at no cost to residences that are otherwise unprotected. These programs provide opportunities for local fire departments to collaborate together to address areas in their community that may be at risk, due to lack of protection provided by a working smoke alarm.

Free Smoke Detector Program – Keeping Our Community Safe

🏠 Protect What Matters Most – Your Family & Home
Did you know that working smoke detectors can cut the risk of dying in a home fire by half? Yet, many homes still go without them – or have detectors that don't work.

That's why the Otsego Fire Department is proud to announce our Smoke Detector Installation Program, designed to make sure every household in our community has access to this vital life-saving equipment.

🚒 About the Program
- Free Smoke Detectors: We provide and install smoke detectors at no cost.
- For All Residents: Living in Otsego City and Otsego Township.
- Quick Installation: Our trained fire fighters will then handle installation.

📅 Schedule Your Appointment
To request smoke detectors and schedule an installation, please contact:
📞 269-694-4390
✉ OtsegoFire@cityofotsego.org
Or visit us in person at 117 E. Orleans St. during normal business hours to schedule an appointment.

🚗 Why This Matters
In the event of a fire, every second counts. Working smoke detectors provide the early warning you need to escape safely. Whether it's alerting your family in the middle of the night or catching smoke while you're cooking, detectors are your first line of defense.
Let's work together to ensure every home in Otsego is fire-safe.

❓Fire Safety Tip of the Month:
Test your smoke alarms once a month. Press the test button until you hear the alarm. If it doesn't sound, replace the battery or the unit.

Thank you for doing your part to keep our community safe.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2025
4PM TO 6PM
TRAIL FOR TREATERS
DOWNTOWN OTSEGO
Presented by:
Otsego Rotary

SEWER BACK-UPS - Call City Hall first at 692-3391.If it is *after hours*, please contact our Police Department at 692-6111.

NOVEMBER 2, 2025

WINTER REMINDERS

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

RECYCLE CURB-SIDE PICK-UP

FIRST & THIRD *TUESDAY* OF THE MONTH

CITY HALL HOURS

MONDAY - THURSDAY
7:30 A.M. TO 5:30 P.M.
FRIDAYS - CLOSED

TRANSFER STATION HOLIDAY HOURS

CLOSED
November 27, 2025
Dec. 25, 2025
Jan. 1, 2026

Save the Date!
December 6, 2025

Watch the Shopper's Guide for event times and details
Activities for all ages.

RENTAL INSPECTIONS WILL BE RE-STARTING
Letter Coming Soon!

PCI PROFESSIONAL CODE INSPECTIONS

CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED

November 27, 2025 & December 24, 25 & 31, 2025 & Jan. 1, 2026

Angela Cronen

City Clerk's Office

- ELECTION NEWS: The City of Otsego will ***not*** be having an election in November 2025. If you have any questions regarding your Voter Registration, please call 692-3391 or email acronen@cityofotsego.org.

- ELECTRONIC SIGN: Have you seen the City's new electronic sign at Brookside Park? The sign is updated regularly with public notices and upcoming events. Watch the sign for updates!

- NEW EMPLOYEE: Welcome Lydia Hanse! Residents may have seen Lydia at the front counter or spoken with her on the phone. Lydia joined the Clerk's Office in March 2025. Lydia's official title is Utility Billing Clerk, but she assists many departments, works at the front counter assisting customers, and answering the phone. We are very fortunate to have Lydia join our office staff. She has many valuable skills and stellar customer service skills. Welcome, Lydia!

FROZEN WATER PIPES

If you experience discoloration in your water or reduced water pressure, ***please notify*** City Hall immediately at 692-3391. As temperatures fall, our Water Department may advise customers to ***leave one faucet running with a pencil size stream of water.*** Please be aware if it is a very cold winter ~ 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 and when you cease running your water***, for any *potential* adjustment to be made on your utility bill. **Please watch for Public Notices in the *Shopper's Guide, our Facebook Page, & Website pertaining to running water. Call 692-3391, if you have any questions.***

Contact Us

NOW is the time to prepare for cold temperatures and insulate your water pipes. Please be advised that if your inside pipes freeze, it is not the responsibility of the City, and credits will not be issued.

SEWER BACK-UPS - Call City Hall first at 692-3391.If it is *after hours*, please contact our Police Department at 692-6111.

HELP US KEEP FIRE HYDRANTS CLEAR OF SNOW

Snow is invariably not far away. As a reminder, residents are responsible for maintaining free and unobstructed access to fire hydrants. We thank you in advance for keeping those accessible to us when we urgently need them.

2025 DECEMBER BOARD OF REVIEW

The December Board of Review will be meeting on Tuesday, December 9, 2025; at 10:00 a.m., *City Hall.* If you disagree with the percentage shown for your Principal Residence Exemption on your Winter 2025 taxes, you must contact City Hall ***before*** Thursday, December 4, 2025. If you have any questions, please call 692-2741.

2025 Winter Property Taxes

Brian Kelley,
Finance Director

Winter property tax bills are mailed to arrive on the first day of December, similar to past years. Please note that original tax bills are sent to property owners. If you have an escrow account to pay your taxes, a copy of your bill will be sent to the escrow company and that will be noted on your tax bill. If you don't receive a tax bill by December 15, please call our office at 269.692.2741 and we will get you a replacement bill. ***Snowbirds – if you have a consistent address for the winter months, please call us by November 15 so we can add your temporary address to our records so you'll get the tax bill mailed directly to you while you're away.***

Residential property owners are encouraged to check their Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) to verify the correct percentage of credit for school operating taxes. For questions about or changes to your PRE, please contact our office before December 5.

Winter 2025 property taxes will be due February 17, 2026. The city does not accept postmarks and any payment received after February 17, 2026 will be subject to late fees and interest.

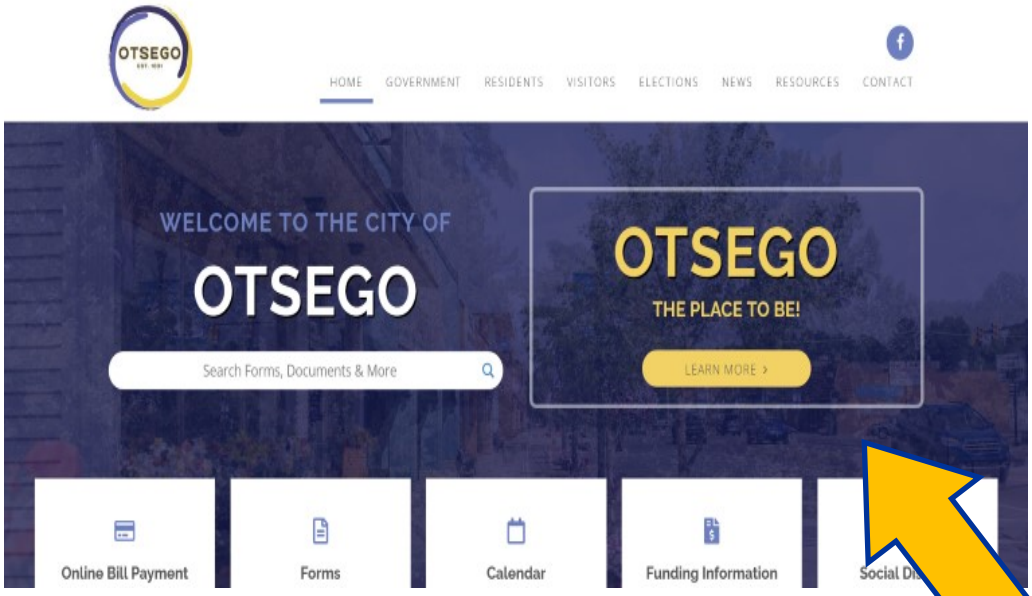
The city will again offer direct debit payments by ACH for those who have signed up. If you're interested in having your taxes paid by ACH, please visit City Hall for an enrollment form.

If you choose to pay your taxes through your bank's Bill Pay Service, please make sure you're using your tax bill "Prop #" as your account identifier. The city now receives these payments electronically and we rely on the account number you input on your bank's website. For property taxes, the account number is different from your water/sewer bill, so please make sure you're using the correct account number so we can apply your payment correctly. You may have to set up the City of Otsego as a second payee on your bill-pay listing, depending on your bank's bill pay options. When using your bank's bill pay service, please allow 10-14 days for the city to receive payment prior to the due date.

When making payment at City Hall, please bring your entire bill with you so we can stamp the top portion as paid, which will serve as your receipt. If you mail your payment and would like a receipt, please send the entire bill and a self-addressed stamped envelope along with your payment.

As always, the property tax information is available 24/7 on the city's website at www.cityofotsego.org, click "Online Bill Payment" then "Proceed to Information/Payment Window". From there you can make a payment, or click on the left side to simply search your information.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 269.692.2741 or bkelley@cityofotsego.org



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REMINDER

CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

1ST AND 3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH

PLEASE CHECK OUR

WEBSITE

WWW.CITYOFOTSEGO.ORG

FOR AGENDAS, MINUTES & OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CITY OF OTSEGO CALENDAR

OCTOBER, 2025

2	CITY TRASH PICK UP DAY	
6	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
7	CITY BRUSH PICK UP DAY	
7	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
20	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
21	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
27	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
31	TRAIL FOR TREATERS—DOWNTOWN	

NOVEMBER, 2025

3	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
4	CITY BRUSH PICK UP DAY	
4	CURBSIDE RECYCLING 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
27	**CITY HALL CLOSED**	

DECEMBER, 2025

1	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
2	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
2	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
4	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
6	HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS	
15	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
16	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
22	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
24 & 25	**CITY OFFICES CLOSED**	
31	**CITY OFFICES CLOSED**	

JANUARY, 2026

1	**CITY OFFICES CLOSED**	
5	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
6	CITY BRUSH PICK-UP DAY	
6	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
8	CITY TRASH PICK-UP DAY	
19	CITY COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL
20	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
26	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

FEBRUARY, 2026

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	WINTER TAXES DUE	
17	CURBSIDE RECYCLING DAY	
23	PLANNING COMMISSION	7:00 P.M. CITY HALL

MARCH, 2026

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

CITY CONTACTS

Police & Fire Emergency……..…911

Fire Non-Emergency…….694-4390

Police Non-Emergency…….692-6111

Chief of Police……..…...692-6111

City Manager ……...…….694-6146

City Clerk ……...…...……....692-3391

Finance Director ..……..……692-2741

Dept. Public Works ……..…694-6636

Website:
www.cityofotsego.org

OTSEGO
EST. 1831

The Agenda is a quarterly publication of the
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 Services
Brad Misner…….Director of Police & Fire
Brian Kelley……..……...Treasurer
Lydia Paille……..……..…...Assessor

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

CITY HALL WILL BE CLOSED

November 27, 2025 & December 24, 25 & 31, 2025 & Jan. 1, 2026