

## Parks Department

### Senior Activities at Oshtemo Community Center

All seniors welcome to attend, advanced sign up is not needed.

**Location:** 6407 Parkview Avenue

**Card Games:**

- *When:* Tuesdays from noon to 3 p.m.
- *Admission Fee:* Free!

**Chair Yoga:** A gentle form of Yoga that helps those who are uncomfortable getting up and down on a mat.

- *When:* Wednesdays from 1 to 2 p.m.
- *Admission Fee:* \$5, paid to instructor.

**Adult Mat Yoga:** Beginner to intermediate classes done in the Tantric Hatha Yoga style.

- *When:* Wednesdays from 6 to 7 p.m.
- *Admission Fee:* \$5, paid to instructor.

### Kalamazoo Community Foundation Endowment Fund

The Oshtemo Parks and Recreation Endowment Fund established at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KCF) is intended to help develop and maintain our prized parks now and in the future. If you'd like to make a lasting gift to our parks, consider making a tax-deductible donation – it's easy!

1. Visit the KCF website at [kalfound.org](http://kalfound.org) and click on the "Give Now" button.
2. Select "Oshtemo Township Parks and Recreation Endowment Fund" from the "Fund Designation" drop-down.
3. Enter your donation amount and payment information.
4. Pat yourself on the back for helping care for our parks, today and in the future!

### New Play Equipment Installed at Township Park

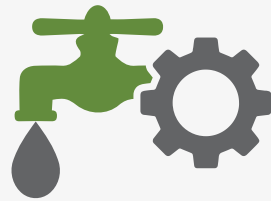
The Sky Ropes Climber (designed for children ages 5-12) stands just over 18 feet tall, and is one of the most popular attractions at Township Park.



The original climber was worn out, so we replaced it with this updated model. Stop by and check it out!

## Infrastructure News

### USDA Sanitary Sewer Expansion Project Updates



The last of the court cases which delayed the USDA Sanitary Sewer Expansion Project has been resolved. Oshtemo Township remains committed to completing these essential public infrastructure upgrades.

Due to the massive cost increases the industry experienced during the delays caused by litigation, the previously announced construction phases are currently being restructured. These smaller phases will be prioritized based (in part) on the following factors:

- Road conditions. The installation of sanitary sewer will require road replacement, so coordinating installation on roads that are nearing the end of their service life is the most effective and efficient use of road funds.
- Lot size and age of plat / neighborhood. The septic systems installed in older neighborhoods do not meet the same design standards as modern septic systems, and therefore any replacement would require more land area to meet current code. If a lot is not large enough to accommodate a second (or third) septic system, the failed system(s) must be removed to make space, which is a very expensive undertaking involving removal of the contaminated soil. Sanitary sewer gives property owners the flexibility to fully utilize their land without sacrificing large areas for drainage fields, and is much more efficient in denser neighborhoods, which is why these areas are being prioritized.
- Necessity. Certain areas are reporting septic system failures at higher rates than others. These areas of concentrated failure are being prioritized to alleviate their immediate need with a long-term solution, and put a stop to potential groundwater contamination.

Once the new phases have been finalized, the township will provide direct communication to the residents in those phases. Construction is anticipated to start in 2025. After sanitary sewer has been installed (and tested), property owners will have two years to coordinate their connection to the system with the Public Works

Department and a contractor to perform the private-side connection work.

Despite the increased costs of the project, the current funding plan does not increase the previously announced township connection fee for residential properties; it remains set at \$7,500. If you have any questions about this project and what it means for you, we encourage residents to contact the Public Works Department.

Sanitary sewers lay below the ground for generations, out of sight and out of mind. However, they are one of the important threads making up the fabric of our community. Your septic system may not be backing up today, but your neighbor with a failed system may be pumping their system monthly without an end date in sight. By coming together as a community and making these infrastructure investments, we can create a strong, resilient foundation for the generations that follow.

### Ongoing Work in the Public Right of Way (ROW)

You may have noticed a lot of marking flags and work happening in the public right of way in front of your house over the last few years. You may have also been disappointed by the damage that work caused to your yard, and wondered who is responsible for fixing it. Or, maybe you were just curious about what was being installed.

Public utility installers working in the ROW are required to obtain a permit from the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC). They are also required to restore the ROW to meet RCKC standards.

To report unrepaired damage or get answers to questions about what work is happening in the public ROW, contact RCKC:

Online: [kalamazooountyroads.com/contact.php](http://kalamazooountyroads.com/contact.php)

Email: [info@kalamazooountyroads.com](mailto:info@kalamazooountyroads.com)

Phone: 269-381-3171

### How to Contact the Public Works Department

Online Contact Form: [oshtemo.org/Contact](http://oshtemo.org/Contact)

Email: [publicworks@oshtemo.org](mailto:publicworks@oshtemo.org)

Phone: 269-216-5244

## At Your Service

### From Clerk Dusty Farmer



The Clerk's office has been hard at work facilitating elections this year, with three already completed successfully. Now, we turn our undivided attention to the November 5, 2024 general election. So far this year, we have facilitated 9,804 total votes, 7,470 of which were absentee ballots. We have registered almost 1,800 voters, and expect many more before November 5.

The business of elections in Oshtemo is larger and busier than ever before. We remain committed to administering fair elections with the help of our highly-qualified staff and certified election inspectors.

The people who run elections are your neighbors, and we all have the same goal: to ensure that every voter has the opportunity to vote, and that every vote counts.

Every election season, our office receives complaints and questions from residents who have received a spam call, text message, email, or letter in the mail claiming that they are not registered to vote, that something is wrong with their ballot, or any other number of election-related claims.

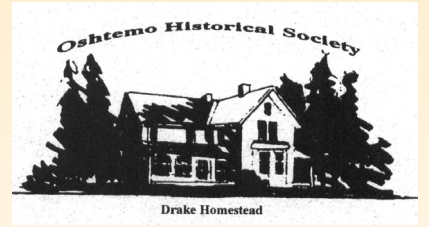
The Clerk's office reminds you that any communication from the State of Michigan or from Oshtemo Charter Township will include official logos and contact information. There are only two official sources of election information; the State and the Township.

Visit the Michigan Voter Information Center at [mi.gov/vote](https://mi.gov/vote) to check your voter registration status, request and track your absentee ballot, preview your ballot, view dropbox and office locations, find your in-person voting locations, update your registration information, and much more.

You can contact the Clerk's office by email at [elections@oshtemo.org](mailto:elections@oshtemo.org), or by phone at 269-216-5224. We are here to serve the community, and we look forward to serving you.

## Oshtemo Historical Society News

### Free Monthly Programs at the Oshtemo Township Hall, March to November



Programs are held at the Oshtemo Township Hall (7275 West Main Street), and start at 7 p.m.:

- **October 17** - Keith Howard, *The History of the Oshtemo Public Library*
- **November 21** - Kevin Meskil, *Restoration Techniques used at the Benjamin Drake House*

## Tax News

### From Treasurer Clare Buszka



Summer tax bills were due on September 16. If you haven't paid yet, you can still pay at the township until February 28, 2025. Late payments incur interest, so please confirm your current balance with our office before making a payment. After February 28, 2025, all delinquent taxes (summer and winter) are transferred to Kalamazoo County and may no longer be paid at the township.

Winter tax bills will be mailed the first week of December. We are not able to accept winter tax payments until December 1.

Winter taxes are due by the close of business on February 14, 2025. Payments received after February 14 will incur a penalty. Postmarked dates are not accepted.

We are happy to accept payments in person at the office, in the mail, in the drop box located in our parking lot, and online! We strongly recommend making an e-check payment online for the best balance of convenience and processing fees.



Scan this QR code to pay your winter tax bill online.

## Early Voting for Nov. General Election



We have partnered with Kalamazoo County to administer and staff the early voting period as required by state law.

Early voting for the November general election is available from October 26, 2024 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and is available until November 3, 2024 at the following locations:

- Kalamazoo County Expo Center  
2900 Lake Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49048
- Portage Parks & Recreation  
320 Library Lane  
Portage, MI 49002
- Fetzer Center at WMU  
2251 Business Court  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
- Douglass Community Association  
1000 West Paterson Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

## Featured Events in Oshtemo

### Fire Prevention and Community Outreach Day

#### What:

Join the Fire Department for a pancake breakfast and delicious fall treats! This year, we have invited local agencies that provide services to the community, so you can meet them as well.

Don't miss out on:

- Touch-A-Truck
- Hands-only CPR Instructions
- Family Fire Plan
- Smoke Alarm Training & Give-away
- Live Music

- Paint a Pumpkin
- Face painting
- And more!

#### When:

Saturday, October 7, 2024  
from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

#### Where:

Fire Station 1 -  
7275 West Main Street



Scan this QR code to learn about this event and more!

## Contact Us!

We'd love to hear from you.



Scan this QR code to view contact information for elected officials and staff, or reach out via phone at **269-375-4260** or via email at [oshtemo@oshtemo.org](mailto:oshtemo@oshtemo.org).

# Reflection and the Future

## From Supervisor Cheri Bell



With the changing of the seasons well underway, now is a good time to reflect on the accomplishments of 2024, evaluate progress toward goals, and look to the future. This year we have been busy building our team of professionals to raise the level of capacity to the level of need, and continued work on our Comprehensive Master Plan and plan for public infrastructure projects.

The Township Board is working through the final stages of the 2025 budget process. We have had many productive conversations and made some hard decisions. A fiscally responsible budget that addresses current plans, all the while fitting into a larger vision is how we tackle spending priorities. We look forward to sharing the final version of the budget with you. Watch past board meetings

of budget conversations at: [publicmedianet.org/gavel-to-gavel/oshtemo-township](http://publicmedianet.org/gavel-to-gavel/oshtemo-township)

### Important 2025 Budget Dates

- October 8th: Draft budget available for public inspection in Township Hall lobby and on the website
- November 12th: Public Hearing General Fund Budget

We are also working to increase communication with the public via our newsletter, website, social media, open houses, surveys, and mailings to inform the public at large, and give you opportunities to provide input on how we can best serve the needs of our growing community. You will see a broader picture of what projects are taking place, what is on the horizon and how this impacts budget dollars throughout the year.

If you have specific questions that are not addressed by other means, you can contact the Supervisor's office by email at [cbell@oshtemo.org](mailto:cbell@oshtemo.org), or by phone at (269) 216-5220. We are here to serve you and welcome your inquiries!

# Safety News



## Household Hazardous Waste Center

Residents of Oshtemo Charter Township are eligible to use the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center (HHWC), free of charge.

The HHWC is located at 1301 Lamont Avenue, and accepts many of the hazardous materials that should not end up in landfills. For a full listing of items that are accepted and not accepted by the HHWC, check out their website:

[kalamazoo.org/hcs/eh/hhw/](http://kalamazoo.org/hcs/eh/hhw/)

You can also contact the HHWC by telephone at 269-383-8742.

The HHWC is open Tuesday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Wednesday from noon to 6 p.m. It is also open the second Saturday of each month (excluding August and September) from 8 a.m. to noon.

## Burn Permits

With the summer drawing to a close, the Fire Department wants to remind residents that a burn permit is required for the open burning of yard waste. You can obtain a free burn permit through our website:

[oshtemo.org/Departments/Fire-Department](http://oshtemo.org/Departments/Fire-Department)

The Fire Department may order that burning cease if the burning is unsafe or if smoke emissions are deemed to be hazardous. A municipal civil infraction may be issued if the burn ordinance is violated.

# Bulk Trash and Yard Waste Programs End November 30

The bulk trash and yard waste voucher programs will end for the 2024 season on November 30, 2024. Vouchers will not be available again until the 2025 season begins on March 1, 2025.

In addition to the new bulk trash voucher program, the Township has introduced a second voucher-based program specifically for yard waste (such as grass clippings, brush trimmings, and leaves). Similar to the bulk trash program, each yard waste voucher allows for up to four cubic yards of waste to be disposed of. Unlike the bulk trash vouchers, yard waste vouchers may be combined for use in a single visit. Each residential household is entitled to two



yard waste vouchers per annual season, in addition to the monthly bulk trash vouchers.

Please note that the yard waste voucher program replaces the "Leaf Day" dropoff program offered by the Township in previous years.

To use either program, simply request the voucher(s) online or stop in to our office during normal hours. Photo ID showing your eligible residential address is required to pick up the vouchers from our office, and must also be presented to the WasteNot Recycling facility staff.

Once you have your voucher, take your bulk trash or yard waste to the WasteNot Recycling facility located at 3025 Ravine Road any time during their hours of operation. Staff are available to assist you with unloading inside of their covered facility.

Learn more about these programs:

[oshtemo.org/Bulk-Trash](http://oshtemo.org/Bulk-Trash)

[oshtemo.org/Yard-Waste](http://oshtemo.org/Yard-Waste)

# Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight issues, including outages or repairs, can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by visiting

[consumersenergy.com/outages/street-light](http://consumersenergy.com/outages/street-light)

# The Future of Oshtemo

## Comprehensive Master Plan Update



Oshtemo Charter Township, in partnership with Progressive AE, continues working to update its Comprehensive Master Plan (which also includes an Economic Development Strategic Plan, Non-Motorized Plan, and Access Management Plan).

Participating in one of our public input events is the best way to share your vision for the future of Oshtemo Township

This project will wrap up in mid-2025, so time is running out to make your voice heard! Keep an eye on this newsletter and our social media to learn about our upcoming engagement opportunities.

Questions regarding this project may be directed to Planning Director Jodi Stefforia, [jstefforia@oshtemo.org](mailto:jstefforia@oshtemo.org).

## Growth Happens. Let's Decide How!



**Thank you to everyone who attended our August 8 "Breakfast for Dinner" public engagement event!**

# Follow Us On Social Media!

[f](https://www.facebook.com/OshtemoCharterTownship) [in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/OshtemoCharterTownship) @OshtemoCharterTownship

[n](https://www.instagram.com/OshtemoTownship) [g](https://www.instagram.com/OshtemoTownship) @OshtemoTownship

# Get Connected to Alerts & Updates from RCKC

[kalamazooountyroads.com](http://kalamazooountyroads.com)  
269-381-3171  
[info@kalamazooountyroads.com](mailto:info@kalamazooountyroads.com)



# New Hire Bios

## June 12, 2024: Ryan Eklund — Paid On Call Firefighter

Ryan is a Kalamazoo native who has been working as a journeyman electrician since 2018, the same year he graduated from the fire academy. Ryan is a devoted husband to his wife of three years, and proud father of a six-month-old. He enjoys playing guitar (occasionally in a church praise band), and long weekends up north.

## June 24, 2024: Ted Hanson — Building Official

Ted is a lifelong Kalamazoo resident, graduating from Western Michigan University in 1992. Ted entered the construction industry at the age of 10 when his dad started taking him along on jobs for his property maintenance business. Ted has been a licensed contractor for 35 years, and a licensed building official for 24 years. Ted and his wife have been married for 34 years (together for 43 years), and are the parents of two grown children. In his spare time, Ted enjoys playing golf, working out, spending time with his granddaughter, and working on his '66 Mustang convertible.

## July 22, 2024: Jackson Couch — Full Time Firefighter

Jackson has been a paid on call firefighter with the Township since August of 2023, and is excited to move into this new role. Jackson has nearly five years of experience working as an EMT / Paramedic in Kalamazoo County, and nearly two years of experience in EMS education. He looks forward to developing in his new position, and is thankful for the opportunity to serve his community.

*Welcome to the team!*



7275 W Main Street  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009  
oshtemo.org | 269-375-4260

### Township Board

**Supervisor Cheri Bell**  
269-216-5258 | cbell@oshtemo.org  
**Clerk Dusty Farmer**  
269-216-5224 | dfarmer@oshtemo.org  
**Treasurer Clare Buszka**  
269-216-5221 | cbuszka@oshtemo.org  
**Trustee Zak Ford**  
269-271-5513 | zford@oshtemo.org  
**Trustee Kristin Cole**  
269-375-4260 | kcole@oshtemo.org  
**Trustee Neil Sikora**  
269-760-6769 | nsikora@oshtemo.org  
**Trustee Michael Chapman**  
810-730-9576 | mchapman@oshtemo.org

## OSHTEMO NEWSLETTER FALL 2024 EDITION



### Important Dates

#### Holiday Office Closures

Offices will be closed November 11, 28-29, and December 24-25. Offices will also be closed until 9 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month for staff meetings.

#### Election Dates

Early In-Person Voting Period:  
October 26 - November 3, 2024  
November 5, 2024: November General Election

#### Board Meetings

Visit the Boards & Committees page on our website for current schedule information:  
[oshtemo.org/Boards-Committees](https://oshtemo.org/Boards-Committees)

#### Summer & Winter Taxes

Summer property taxes were due on September 16, but can still be accepted at the township (with interest added) until February 28, 2025. Winter tax bills will go out the first week of December and are due prior to the close of business on February 14, 2025.