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The Board of Trustees meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the Bay Township Hall in Horton Bay

BAY TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

Michigan Townships Deliver Value to Residents and Business

Although economic uncertainties and recent concerns about how efficiently government operates often dominate the news, too little is said about local governments, which offer people a choice to live and work in unique communities that best match their values and preferences for taxation, government service levels and regulatory climate.

Did you know that half of all local governments in the United States have 1,000 or fewer residents? These smaller governments are well-positioned to respond efficiently to present public budget challenges. Besides offering greater accountability, decisions made at the local level help keep power in

the hands of the people and prevent other layers of government from overreaching into people's liberty and freedom. In addition, the independence and authority of townships attracts people to actively participate in civic affairs, which in turn benefit the community.

For many decades, townships have been the economic engine of Michigan's prosperity, offering employers lower property tax rates, expeditious regulatory review and action, and large land tracks. According to figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau following the 2010 Census, townships serve over half of the state's population—52% to be exact. In



Bay Township Hall June 2015

addition, township officials govern 96% of the state's land area and protect 58% of Michigan's total property valuation.

(continued to page 4)

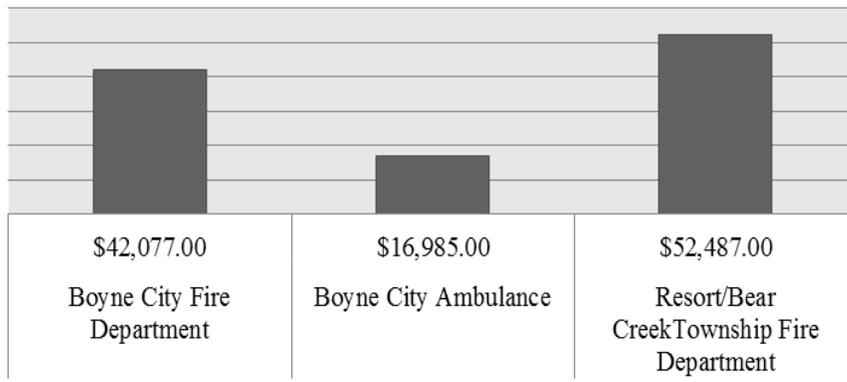
Disabled Veteran's Exemption

In 2013, the State of Michigan passed P.A. 161, which allows Military Veterans who are 100% disabled to claim a 100% exemption from property taxes for their principal residence. This means that if your claim is approved, you will not have to pay property taxes. In order to file a

claim, you must complete a State Tax Commission Affidavit for Disabled Veterans Exemption and provide the required documentation. The affidavit with supporting documents must be submitted to the Bay Township assessor. Submitted affidavits will be reviewed by the Bay Town-

ship Board of Review at the meeting at the Bay Township Hall on Tuesday, July 21st at 11:00 AM, or at the December Board of Review Meeting. The affidavit form can be found at http://michigan.gov/documents/treasury/5107ST-CAffidavit_441749_7.pdf

2015-16 Budgeted Emergency Services Costs Totaling \$111,549.00



Bay Township
now contracts
for fire services
from both
Boyne City Fire
Department and
Resort/Bear
Creek Township
Fire Department

Bay Township contracts with both Boyne City and Resort/Bear Creek Township for fire service and with Boyne City for ambulance services at this time. This is paid for directly out of the Bay Township General Fund and is not an added millage on to our taxes like so many other area townships use for paying emergency services funds.

On March 1, 2015, Bay Township negotiated to receive fire protection services from both Boyne City and Resort/Bear Creek Fire Department. The southern portion of the township will be covered by the BCFD and the northern portion will be covered by Resort / Bear Creek. Please refer to the map (page 4) to determine south/north demarcation. Northern township properties will now be closer to a fire station and this may improve your insurance

rates. Resort/Bear Creek FD is undergoing an ISO evaluation for the new service area in June. This information will be posted on the township webpage as soon as it is available.

Public Protection Classification (PPO) is the countrywide classification system used by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to reflect a community's local fire protection for property insurance rating purposes. The public fire protection of a city, town or area is graded using ISO's Fire Suppression Rating Schedule to develop the community's classification. ISO classifies communities from 1 (the best) to 10 (the worst) based on how well they score on the ISO Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, which grades such features as water distribution, fire department equipment and manpower and fire alarm facilities.

Some residents have already reported a decrease in their home insurance premiums,

others have reported no change. Each insurance company independently determines the premiums it charges its policy holders. Contact your insurance company with this new information as it pertains to your location.

Both Boyne City and Resort/Bear Creek fire departments will continue their mutual aid coverage throughout the entire township.

Resort/Bear Creek Fire Department maintains both a pumper and a tanker at Station #3 located at 5799 Charlevoix Road. This is located just west of Camp Daggett Road on US-31.

Boyne City continues to provide high quality services and equipment as well. Last fall the BCFD replaced its 1993 pumper truck with a brand new one that is used on most fires it responds to, including those in our township.

The Boyne City EMS (ambulance) Department is currently putting the finishing touches on its two brand new Ford 450 4x4 ambulances, which will replace its existing three ambulances. The new ambulances are combined with its always staffed ECHO unit first response vehicle. Improved equipment has also been acquired including upgraded cardiac monitor defibrillators and electric lift stretchers. This means first rate Advanced Life Support services for all Bay Township residents.

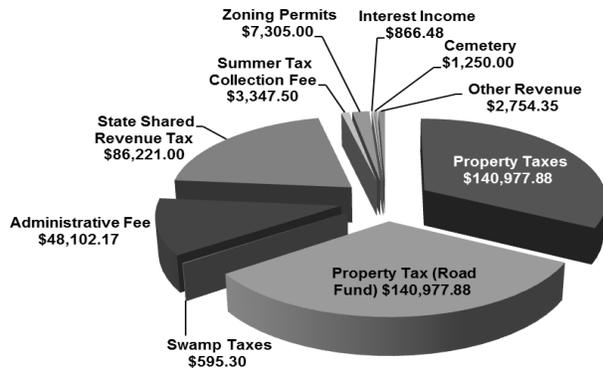
In May, Boyne City voters approved building new facilities on their current City Hall site. Construction will begin in the spring of 2016 for both the BCFD and EMS. In the case of the ambulances, their facilities will now be closer to Bay Township.

(see map on pg. 4 and pictures on pg. 5)

Bay Township in conjunction with Charlevoix County uses a printing service to print and mail tax bills and the accompanying newsletter. This is a more productive and less expensive way to create and mail tax bills. The printing service, however, is unable to combine tax bills; consequently if you have more than one parcel in Bay Township, you will receive your tax bills in separate envelopes.

Mortgage Escrows: Tax information will be forwarded to your bank per their request. Taxes paid by a mortgage escrow or a title company will not generate a receipt to the current owner. Receipts are mailed only upon request, by contacting Steve Ritter, Treasurer, either by email (treasurer@baytownship.org) or phone 231.582.5453.

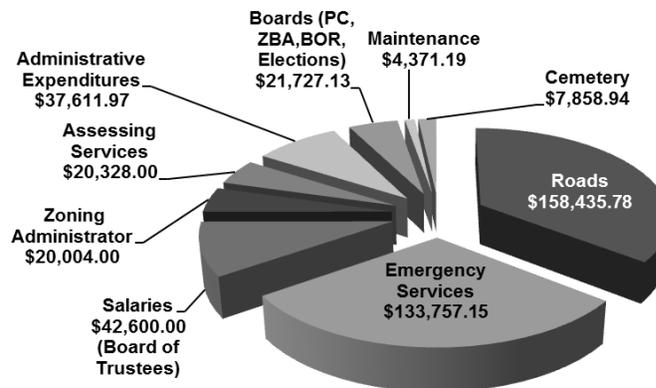
April 2014 – March 2015 Income Received = \$432,297.56



Bay Township receives one (1) mill for roads, voted in by township residents, along with State Revenue Sharing monies, which are the portion of sales tax returned to the Township. Other income comes from administrative fees, cemetery fees, permit fees, swamp taxes and interest income. The graph shows a breakdown of total monies received by Bay Township for the fiscal year 2014 – 2015.

Bay Township Expenditures for the fiscal year 2014 – 2015 graph shows the breakdown on expenditures. All monies in excess of the actual expenditures are put into the Township reserve funds that are held for major road projects, emergency services (fire and ambulance coverage) and in case of an unforeseen emergency. Bay Township drew upon this reserve fund for road costs over the one (1) mill.

Bay Township April 2014 - March 2015 Expenditures = \$446,690.20



A Message from the Charlevoix County Planning Commission

The Charlevoix County Planning Commission is in the process of updating the [County Future Land Use Plan](#), which was adopted in 2009. This plan serves as a guide for County and local government officials as they make decisions regarding land use and development. It is an advisory document only, and it does not supersede any township, city or village plan in the county.

State law requires that the plan be reviewed and updated every five (5) years. As part of this process, the Planning Commission is conducting a survey to determine if the land use goals in the 2009 plan are still important to citizens in the county today. *The results of this survey will help determine the future direction of Charlevoix County. Your input is important to us!* Please take a few moments to complete our survey by clicking on the link below.

<http://form.jotform.us/form/51136536495156>

Paper copies of the survey are also available at:
 Charlevoix County GIS & Planning Department
 County Building – Lower Level
 301 State St.
 Charlevoix, MI 49720
 Phone: (231) 547-7234

Michigan Townships Deliver Value to Residents and Business

(continued from page 1)

Summer 2015 Taxes are due at the township postmarked no later than September 14, 2015. Postmarks ARE accepted by Bay Township as an on-time payment.

Visit the Bay Township web site at www.charlevoixcounty.org for updated information on Treasurer's hours for summer tax collection.

Transferring property within family

Beginning December 31, 2014, a transfer of residential real property is not a transfer of ownership (does not uncap the taxable value) if the transferee is the transferor's or the transferor's spouses' mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, adopted son, adopted daughter, grandson or granddaughter.

Two or more parcels next to each other?

If you have a Principal Residence Exemption (Homestead Exemption) for the parcel your home is on and you have vacant property on a separate deed that is adjacent to your home parcel, you may be eligible for an Adjacent Principal Residence Exemption. If you are interested in finding out if you are eligible for this exemption, please contact the Bay Township assessor, Anna Wasylewski at assessor@baytownship.org or 231-549-3019

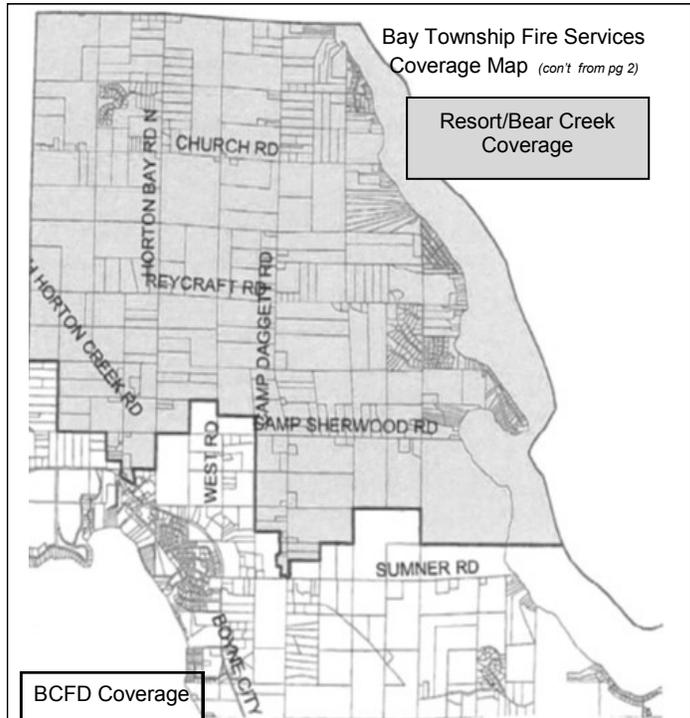
However, compared to cities and villages in Michigan, townships receive 82% less total revenue and 66% less property tax revenue. This means that townships have learned to do more with less—not just recently, but for quite some time.

Operating with limited resources means that townships provide essential local government services to residents in the most efficient manner possible. Through innovative strategies as well as cooperative efforts with neighboring entities, townships are instrumental in the delivery of services, infrastructure expansion, and appropriate economic development site selection. In addition to carrying out the statutory duties of tax collection, elections and property assessment, the range of services offered by a township varies, depending on the preferences of its residents, but may include: fire, police and EMS; planning and zoning; public water and sewers; library services; parks and recreation; senior programs; waste hauling and recycling; cemeteries; and road funding.

Data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, which gathers and breaks down revenues and expenditures by type of local government, show that when compared to Michigan's cities and villages, Michigan townships operate quite efficiently including:

- ◆ spending 80% less for operations, debt and capital outlays
◆ spending 79% less for law enforcement
◆ spending 50% less for fire protection
◆ spending 52% less for tax collections and accounting, and 37% less for other administrative services, including elections spending 80% less for salaries and wages. In fact, services are often delivered in small townships by part-time officials and employees receiving nominal salaries, often without benefits.

Providing services that are of value to you in a cost-effective manner is paramount to Bay Township. Our goal is to continue to meet 21st century challenges in a way that provides the greatest benefit to our community while upholding the values that embody local control and authority among the citizenry of Bay Township and its elected officials.



More than one Principal Residence Exemption? Under Michigan Law, if you purchased a home and are claiming a Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) for it but you still own another home and are trying to sell it, you may be able to claim a PRE for both properties. If you would like to see if you are eligible, contact the Bay Township assessor, Anna Wasylewski at assessor@baytownship.org or 231-549-3019 You will need to provide parcel numbers for both properties in order to complete the check.

Who is driving the decisions on local road projects and maintenance?

As you're taking a leisurely drive on a lovely day in Michigan you may have experienced a rough patch of road or questioned why the speed limit is the rate it is for that particular stretch of road. Although the road may be located within a township, did you know that the township does not have authority over that road?

Most residents do not realize that local roads, including construction and maintenance of these roads, are under the jurisdiction of the county where the road is located. Since the 1930s, townships have had little road authority, and they receive no transportation funding (Public Act 51 of 1951). However, over 95% of townships in Michigan *do* contribute money to the road commission in the county in which their township is situated. In fact, it is common for counties to strongly urge townships to contribute to roads at a high level of matching funds.

About 10 years ago, many counties requested a 50-50 match from townships for construction, repair and maintenance of local roads. Due to changes in funding over the last decade, it is now common for counties to ask townships to pick up 75% of the cost in order to receive a 25% funding match from the county. In some cases, counties require that 100% of the cost of the project be funded by the township. Between 2000 and 2014, Bay Township has spent **\$1,808,928.00** on road projects including gravel and paving with some of these funds being matched by the Charlevoix County Road Commission. This figure does not include dust control.

Although the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has provided significant funding for roads, that money is primarily being spent on federal highways and roads under state jurisdiction, rather than local roads. Meanwhile, transportation funding at the state level has not increased, and there has been a sharp decrease in state shared revenue to local units of government.

Bay Township has completed an evaluation of Bay Township roads and is in the process of developing a five year plan. Data collected included the condition of the roads, traffic counts, residences served by a road, a public forum and consultation with the Charlevoix County Road Commission. The plan will detail the decision-making criteria the Board of Trustees will use as a recommended guideline in administering the township road millage. Major investment will be to maintain the major thoroughfares such as Camp Daggett Road, portions of Sumner Road, and Old Horton Bay Road. The Charlevoix County Road Commission has committed to maintain the Boyne City/Charlevoix and Horton Bay Road roads. Residents are encouraged to review this plan which will be on the Bay Township website once approved.

ZBA Working in Conjunction with the Township and County Planning Commission to Update Section 14 of Zoning

The Board's purpose and duties are described in Section 14 of the Ordinance which generally provides for hearing appeals from Bay Township property owners who believe they have been aggrieved by a decision of the Bay Township Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator is charged with administering the Ordinance. The Board's decisions are guided by the Ordinance variance elements outlined in Section 14.9 of the Ordinance, which is currently being revised with the ZBA, Planning Commission, and Charlevoix County Planning Commission, working together. Once approved by the Township Board of Trustees, the revision will be posted to the Township web sight. Currently the ZBA has four (4) regularly scheduled meetings during the year held on the 2nd Tuesday of January, April, July and October. All other meetings will be posted as required. The ZBA is in need of an additional alternate member. Any interested resident is welcome to contact Jim Vanek, Clerk (clerk@baytownship.org) to submit an application.



BCFD Chief, Dennis Amesbury; Bay Township Trustee, Georganna Monk; BC City Manager, Michael Cain and BC EMS Director, John Lamont in front of new ambulance & pumper truck.

(see related article on page 2)



Resort/Bear Creek Fire Chief, Al Welsheimer with Bay Township Trustee, Bill Wehrenberg at Fire Station No. 3.

DTE Energy Discusses Process to Bring Natural Gas to Township

Representatives from DTE Energy were on hand at the May Township meeting to discuss the process of extending natural gas facilities to the unserved areas in Bay Township. The presentation spoke to the significant costs savings, up to 50% over propane. A current propane customer would have to purchase their propane for \$.77/gallon to compare with natural gas. Other benefits of using natural gas include the abundant supply and the fact that natural gas is domestically produced. DTE Energy uses an investment model that weighs both the costs related to the expansion and revenue that will be generated from the extension of their facilities. If there is a shortfall of revenue, each home or business owner is required to pay this shortfall. For more information on obtaining natural gas, please contact Carole VanDamme at 231.347.0107 or by email at vandamme@dteenergy.com.

Bay Township Cemetery Committee — 1st in County to Sponsor WAA

Your Bay Township Cemetery Committee has been very active over the past six months sponsoring *Wreaths Across America* and the annual Memorial Day Ceremony. We have also begun planning and implementing projects, especially at Dyer Cemetery, to beautify and improve our township's cemeteries.

This was the first year of Bay Township, partnering with Horton Bay United Methodist Church's North Bay Cemetery, to participate with the *Wreaths Across America* project, and we were the first township in Charlevoix County to share in this work of dedicating a wreath on *each* veteran's grave in the township. The American Legion in citing Bay Township said, "In recognition of your dedication of honoring Veterans . . . whether it is by having the largest gathering of citizens on our Memorial Day Visitations route, providing refreshments that day or by your virtual cemetery showing the service of each veteran. Now again you have another first by becoming the first and hopefully not the last township in Charlevoix County to enter into the *Wreaths Across America* program. . . ." Read the complete citation when you visit the township hall.

Even in the rainy conditions, this Memorial Day's event was a success. The attendees, approximately 68 (about the same number as last year in the sunshine), remembered our veterans with the honor guard from the American Legion Post 228's military salute followed by taps. Dean Kleinschrodt, Post Commander, proclaimed Bay Township the Post's favorite! Many enjoyed the coffee and doughnuts and conversation that followed.

The landscaping plans at Dyer Cemetery must be updated and then implemented. Right now simple improvements the committee have made include a new bench on the top of the hill overlooking the gravesites in the newer portion of Dyer Cemetery. But long-range plans include the establishment of a "ring" road at Dyer Cemetery improvements to parking and beautifying the plantings. Our future plans include the establishment of a "ring" road at Dyer Cemetery, but for the time being, we have installed a sign instructing visitors not to drive on the graves at the cemetery! Both Oaklawn Cemetery and Dyer Cemetery require mapping and graves' identification. In order to achieve this mapping economically, Bay Township hopes to partner with adjoining townships to conduct the audit simultaneously. Please contact the Township's officers or Christine Redman, chair of the committee, if you have concerns or suggestions.



Dean Kleinschrodt, Commander of Boyne City American Legion Ernest Peterson Post 228, playing taps at the grave of Civil War Veteran Edward Parks, the only veteran buried in Oaklawn Cemetery, at the Wreaths Across America ceremony on December 13, 2014

Horton Bay Welcomes an Area Visitor

Bay Township residents and visitors are always in for surprise sightings of the abundant wildlife in our area. It is not unusual to have to stop as turkeys cross the road, and then sometimes upon changing their minds, go back across the road. Nor is it unusual to see the deer in the fields, at the edge of the woods or bounding across the roads in front of our vehicles. This spring however, brought several sightings of one of Michigan's Black Bear similar to the one in the picture. (*The picture taken of the actual bear was not of high enough quality for printing*).

Black bear are shy by nature. If you are hiking through the woods, a bear would most likely hear you or pick up your scent and run off before you even knew it was there. Bear have a natural fear of humans and it is best if that fear remains intact per the Department of Natural Resource. However, bears are also large and powerful animals. They have relatively poor eyesight, but an outstanding sense of smell and an uncanny hearing ability. Their keen sense of smell is what leads them in the spring time to local bird feeders, suet and trash cans. They are looking for the high fat content found in birdseed and upon coming out from hibernation, they are hungry. Here is what you can do:

- ◆ **Make trash cans inaccessible.** Bring them in at night.
- ◆ **Enclose your compost pile.** Especially those that include kitchen scraps.
- ◆ **Recycle wisely.** Use enclosed bins if you store recyclables outside.
- ◆ **Keep your barbecue grill clean and free of drippings.** Move the grill away from your house and clean it regularly with bleach or ammonia.
- ◆ **Rethink your bird feeders.** In the summer birds can make do with naturally available food. If you do set up feeders install them away from the house.



These quiet, yet dominant nomads of our coniferous and mixed forests, are worthy of both admiration and respect.

A special thank you to all contributors to the Bay Township Summer 2015 Newsletter including The Michigan Township Association, Department of Natural Resources, Carole VanDamme, DTE Energy; Anna Wasylewski, Assessor; Chris Redman, Cemetery Committee Chairperson; Steve Ritter, Treasurer; Jim Vanek, Clerk; Bill Wehrenberg, Trustee; and Ron Van Zee, Zoning Administrator.

Georganna Monk and Wendy Simmons, Co-Editors