



SANDS TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025

OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Friday, 10 a.m -3 p.m.
987 S M-553, Gwinn, MI 49841 Phone 906-249-9169 Fax
906-249-2120

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Supervisor - Darlene Walch
362-3989

Clerk - Carolyn Kerkela
361-0630

Treasurer - Lee Yelle

Trustee - Justin Yelle

Trustee - David Kallio

Zoning Administrator -
Randall Yelle

PLANNING COMMISSION

Shelley Brauer (Chair)
Justin Yelle

Suzanne Sundell
Pamela Lajewski-Pearson
Cory Bushong

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Victoria Jenema (Chair)
Shelley Brauer
David Kallio
Jane Noe
Jamin Wonch

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire Chief - Tom Wahlstrom
239-4967

Assistant Chief -
Andrew Sicotte

Assistant Chief -
Andrew Linsmeier

EMS Coordinator -
Lyn Nelson
249-3392

Assistant Coordinator -
Frank Rosado
249-3081

Updates

Have You Seen the New Trash Truck? House and Business Numbers

The long-awaited trash truck made its debut on December 30, and it's teal! The sanitation team is thrilled to have this rust-free and reliable vehicle. If you haven't seen it on the road yet, take a look at the website for the before and after pictures.

Name the New Trash Truck!

We're having a Name the New Trash Truck contest through Friday, February 14.

Submit your suggestions by emailing office@sandstownship.org or using the Contact Us form on the website. The sanitation team will choose the winning name and it will be announced on the website on February 21.

New Website and Logo

The township rolled out a new website and logo in early December. The website, which includes the information you're used to seeing, is also mobile device friendly and easy to use on your phone or tablet. The new website address is <https://sandstownshipmi.gov>.

A new feature of the website, located under "Departments," is a cemetery section. The cemetery page provides a Lot Finder, which includes a map of the Sands Township cemetery and a search box that allows you to locate the exact section, lot, and date of a burial when you search by name.

For the protection of your family, employees, and property, please ensure your street address is easily readable on your home or business structure as well as on your mailbox.

The numbers must be clearly visible from the roadways, allowing emergency services to quickly recognize the location of the emergency.



Important Notifications Available

We continue to register residents to receive important information, such as trash pick-up changes and weather-related closings, by text or email through our partnership with Marquette County Central Dispatch. To enroll in this service, email us at office@sandstownship.org, come by the office, or call 906-249-9169. Please indicate your preferred method of contact and provide your contact information (such as, email address for email notifications, or telephone number for text or phone message notifications).

Did you know?



The first burial in the Sands Township Cemetery was on October 11, 1996.

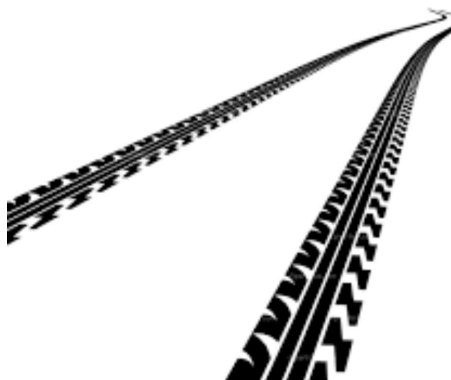
On the Roads Again...

Did you know Sands Township has about 22 miles of roads to maintain, not including the main trunk lines of M-553 or County Road 480? Each year we plan road maintenance projects to help keep our road conditions in the best possible shape. It's an interesting and sometimes challenging task to anticipate which roads need what type of treatment to get the most life out of them. Factors that damage or destroy roads include water, traffic, temperature fluctuations, and unusual events such as floods or fire. The maintenance planning process includes reviewing the road's current condition, considering which damage factors affect that particular road, determining what level of treatment is required and estimating costs for each project. Routine maintenance is the best way to keep roads in good shape and contain repair costs.

Road treatments fall into two broad categories: preventative maintenance and structural repairs. Preventative maintenance helps ward off the need for major repairs and is less expensive than structural improvements that can quickly eat up a budget. It reminds me of dental work: a good cleaning or a small filling is an easier and less expensive way to protect a tooth when compared to a crown, root canal or dental implant.

Methods used most frequently for road preventative maintenance are crack seal or chip seal. Crack seals are those squiggly lines of goop that plug surface breaks to keep water out. Crack seal can last one to two years before a more intense fix is needed. That next level fix is chip seal, where liquid asphalt emulsion and stone chips are applied to the road surface. Depending on the condition of the road when it's applied, a chip seal treatment can last between three and seven years, sometimes longer. No one likes chip seal when it's fresh, but once the chips squish into the emulsion and the surface settles down, it's the repair that nets the longest life for the money. When vehicles drive over newly laid chip seal it helps pack the chips into the emulsion and create a smoother surface, but it definitely pays to drive slowly over fresh chip seal to minimize flying stones and emulsion spatters.

Structural improvements become necessary when road surfaces are too worn or the underlying structure deteriorates. An overlay puts an asphalt layer on top of existing pavement, adding structural strength. This treatment can hold up for five to 10 years and maybe longer. A more damaged surface requires "crush and shape," where the existing surface is pulverized into the existing road bed, followed by the application of a new layer of asphalt. If the road is damaged beyond what either of those methods can fix, complete reconstruction is needed. That is the most expensive repair (approximately \$400,000 per mile compared to a maintenance chip seal at about \$35,000 per mile).



Marquette County Road Commission (MCRC) staff helps the Township assess the condition of our roads and offer advice on maintenance needs. After Township officials review this information, a plan is sent to MCRC. They then manage the bidding process for projects, getting the most reasonable costs and repair schedules by coordinating the needs of all 19 townships in Marquette County. Your voter-supported road millage provides funding for the Township's road maintenance projects and we truly appreciate your support as we strive to have good roads.

Treasurer's News

The 2024 Winter property tax statements were mailed by December 1, 2024. If you have not received your statement or if your statement went to your escrow company and you would like a copy, call the office at (906-249-9169).

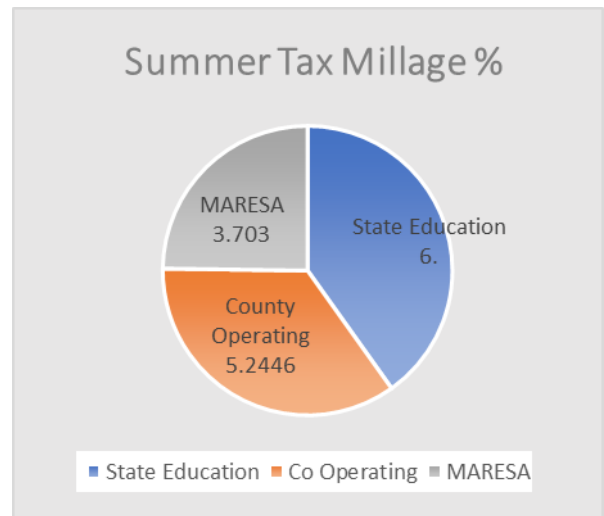
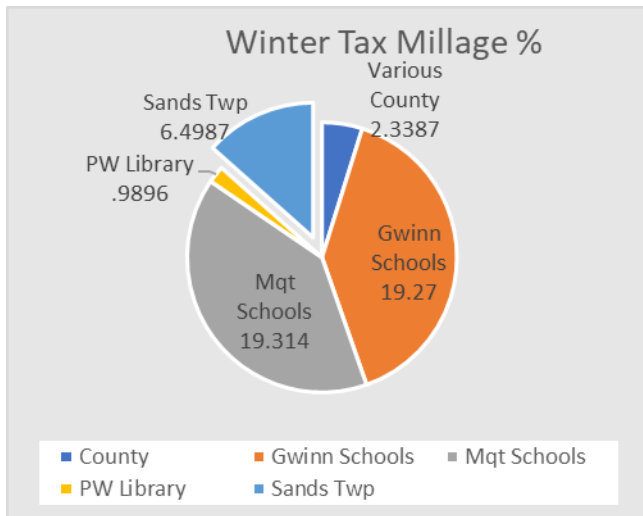
To avoid interest or penalty, winter taxes must be paid in the office by February 14, 2025 (no postmarks accepted). Allow 7-10 days for mailed payments to arrive. Beginning February 15, 2025, a 3% penalty is added to unpaid summer and winter bills. Taxes are delinquent if not paid by February 28, 2025.

Beginning March 1, 2025 all tax payments must be paid directly to the Marquette County Treasurer's office.



On or before February 28, 2025, residents may pay their taxes online using the secure AllPaid website. A 2.95% transaction fee is the payer's responsibility and applies for payments made using VISA, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover. To pay online, visit the Sands Township website at sandstowship.org and click the **Tax Info** button on the home page.

View the pie chart for a breakdown of where your tax dollars are going.



Note: A Principal Residence Exemption (known as the homestead exemption) exempts a residential home from the 18 mills tax levied by the school districts.

Election News from the Clerk

Election Updates

Whew – what an election year. The November election saw the highest voter turnout in Michigan’s history! I would like to extend a sincere thank you not only to the election inspectors who made sure all of our elections ran smoothly, but a big thank you as well to all of our residents who showed up to vote or voted absentee and were kind, courteous and respectful of the process.

We had some major changes to our elections last year, especially with the start of early voting. Throughout the state, early voting was a huge success and over 300 Sands Township voters chose to vote early in November. Another big change is that absentee voters can now bring their ballot to either an early vote site or to the polls on election day and put it through the tabulator themselves.

An additional enhancement to elections is the permanent ballot list. Voters who request to be on this list will be automatically mailed a ballot for every election for which they are eligible.

Beginning in 2025, our election software will no longer support the permanent absentee application list. If you still wish to be mailed an *application* prior to every election instead of a ballot, please notify the Township office or send an email to clerk@sandstownship.org.

May Election - Gwinn School District

Voters in the Gwinn School District will have a May 2025 school bond proposal election. Ballots will be mailed near the end of March to voters on the permanent ballot list. There will not be early voting available for this election (early voting is only for federal and state elections).

*Remember – if you are a snowbird or wish to have your ballot mailed to an address besides your registered address, make sure we are given that information. The Post Office will **not** forward ballots.*

Fire Department Updates

Winter Fire Safety

One in every seven structure fires in the United States involve heating equipment. Of those, half of all home heating fires occur in December, January, and February.

10 tips to help avoid home heating related emergencies include:

- Keep combustibles a minimum of three feet away from heat sources such as fire places, wood stoves, radiators, and space heaters.
- Keep generators outside and away from doors and windows.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms and test them at least once per month.
- Plug only one heating appliance (space heater) into an electrical outlet at a time.
- Store cooled ashes in a sealed metal container away from your home and other buildings.
- Have a professional clean and inspect your chimney and vents every year.
- Have a professional perform routine inspection and maintenance on heating appliances.
- Keep vents at exterior of home clear of ice and snow build up.
- Keep driveways and entrances clear of snow to allow easy access of first responders to your home.
- Keep home numbers visible and free of obstruction from snow and snow banks.

Peter White Public Library News



Peter White Public Library (PWPL) continues to be fiscally responsible with our tax monies as well as donations from the public and the Friends of the Library, a volunteer group that uses donated materials as a lucrative resource. Friends of the Library provides used book sales from donated materials in three-day sales twice a year as well as running the used bookstore on the main floor of the library across from the circulation desk. This year the Friends provided around \$60,000 to library needs. These funds are used for materials, programs, and special events. Another milestone is that donor contributions to the PWPL Endowment Fund reached \$1.6 million as of October 30, 2024. These are wonderful achievements, and the funds are integral to the mission of the library, “Our mission is to enrich the community through access to library services and cultural opportunities.” And a big thank you goes to each township, including Sands, for supporting the work of PWPL by continuing their library designated millage.

There are so many opportunities to visit the library throughout the year. Winter in the U.P. can be long and sometimes just doing something with others of like minds can lift your spirits. I particularly love to read and there are multiple book clubs for adults. “Tasty Reads” is for those who love to cook. “Heritage Room Book Group” is

for readers who enjoy contemporary fiction. “All Booked Up” focuses on current fiction and has a group on Facebook that you can join. Non-fiction readers have a book club at the library as well. Check the PWPL website for the dates and times of each book club.

If you have children in your family, there are opportunities for children of all ages to enjoy a trip to the library to hear engaging books read aloud. Times and appropriate ages are listed on the website. Older students will find “After School Programs” and special programs when local schools are closed for half or full days. There is even an opportunity to visit the library as a family for a “Family Game Night.”

I could go on for pages about all our local library does to meet its mission. The PWPL website and/or newsletters are excellent ways to quickly find what is happening and when. I encourage you to explore all the programs that interest you and/or your family. The best part of library programs might be that they are usually free! I hope to see you there this winter!

Submitted by: N. Suzanne Standerford, TAC Representative



Sanitation News and Reminders



- Have your garbage out by 4 a.m. - we start early!
- Large items and bags weighing more than 30 pounds cannot be taken.
- Our garbage crew cannot pick up building materials, appliances, furniture, carpet, or metal. Please call our office to find out how to dispose of these items at the:
 - Sands Recycling and Transfer Station for a fee (**cash or check only** - see below), or
 - Marquette County landfill using a permit purchased at the township office.
- Items containing freon must be taken to the County landfill for disposal after obtaining a \$40 per item permit from the Sands Township office.
- Sands Township does not offer curbside recycling. Your recycling can be brought to the Transfer Station free of charge.
- Do not throw used batteries in the trash! You can bring them by the Township Office or the Sands Recycling and Transfer Station for recycling.

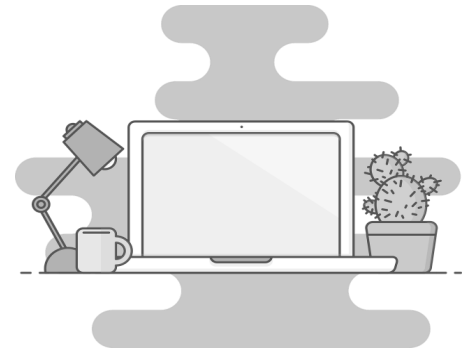
Transfer Station Hours and Fees:

Wednesday 4 - 7 p.m.
 Thursday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

| Load | Fee |
|---|-------------|
| 1 or 2 small items, car trunk | \$5 |
| 3 or more smaller items in a car, truck, or trailer | \$10 |
| Small pickup, SUV, Van, or small trailer | \$15 |
| Medium trailer, regular size pickup | \$20 |
| Large trailer, long box pickup | \$25 |
| Box trailers or dump trailers | \$25 and up |
| Metal or Recycling (including glass) | No Charge |

Landfill Hours

The Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority (MCSWMA) (landfill) is open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Electronics Recycling Hours and Fees:

3rd Saturday of each month 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Available to all Marquette County residents thanks to the extension of a grant from EGLE.

- Computers (desktop, laptop, tablets) - no charge
- Printers - no charge
- Cables, cords, wires, keyboards, mice, stereo equipment, DVD/CD players, satellite tuner boxes, routers, other miscellaneous items - no charge
- LCD small computer monitors - no charge
- CRT computer monitors - \$5 each
- Flat Screen TVs and box TVs - \$5

Electronics included in this program are primarily communication and computer related. Unfortunately, items such as vacuum cleaners, microwaves, and hairdryers are not included in the definition of electronics.



In 2024, Sands Township had almost 4300 unique visits by residents to the Recycling and Transfer Station to drop off plastic, paper, metal and glass recycling! In addition, we had 458 visits from individuals on our electronics recycling days.

TOWNSHIP INFORMATION

Stay in Touch with Sands Township

Check out our (new!) website at <https://sandstowshipmi.gov> for the latest township information. Here you will find draft board minutes, zoning information, the transfer and recycle station schedule, facility rental information, and announcements with the latest information and postings for our residents. Monthly reports are submitted by several departments and committees and are posted in the office for public viewing. We are also on Facebook - like our page to keep up-to-date on township information.

For last-minute information such as office closings or garbage pickup changes, we will update the township phone message, our Facebook page, and the website, when possible. For garbage delays due to weather, TV6 will also be notified. In addition, emergency notification will be sent to residents who have opted to receive texts, emails,

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

Township Board meetings are the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Draft minutes are posted at the township office and on our website. There is also a meeting summary posted each month in the Mining Journal.

The public is welcome to attend all meetings in person or by Zoom.

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson - Missy Lehtomaki

Vice Chair - Carrie Lusk

Secretary- Kirsten Matthews

Members - Bob Kallio, Wendell Kurr, Wendy Maas, and Shawn Sitar

Please contact the Township Office for information on the next scheduled Recreation Committee meeting.

These meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Sands Township Fire Department meets the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 7 p.m. at Station 1.

The public is always welcome to attend these meetings.



PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission meets on the third Tuesday of January, April, May, June, July, and September in 2025.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The ZBA hears appeals, evaluates requests for interpretations, and approves or denies variances. They have four regular meeting dates throughout the year; however, the board only meets if there is business to conduct.

Please call the township office for additional information.

CEMETERY INFORMATION



The Sands Township Cemetery is located on Miller Road. Water is available at the fire tank for plants and flowers.

Please, no vehicles on grass areas at any time!

Lots are available at a cost of \$250 for residents and \$350 for non-residents.

Our cemetery sexton is Tom Redlon. General cemetery maintenance is done by Nick LaMere and Ron Tervo performs the lawn maintenance. Graves are dug by Jamin Wonch.

For more information, please contact Tom Redlon, Cemetery Sexton at 346-6927 or the township office at 249-9169.

The Cemetery Ordinance is available for review at the Township during regular office hours.



NEWSLETTER

987 S State Hwy M-553
Gwinn, MI 49841

Striving to protect your water & environment

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TOWNSHIP ENCLOSED

Transfer Station Hours:

Wednesday 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

2nd and 4th Saturday of each month –
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Electronics Recycling

3rd Saturday of each month - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Want to Get Involved?

Are you interested in getting involved with the Township, but aren't sure how? We always need subs on our garbage truck, and we are looking for people to join our fire department and EMS.

Contact the office if you are interested in these opportunities. If none of these sounds like a good fit, but you would still like to get involved, let us know and we will see how we can use your help!

Contact Us

906-249-9169

987 S M-553, Gwinn, MI 49841

office@sandstowship.org

www.sandstowshipmi.gov

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Your newsletter is paid for with your tax dollars. We welcome your opinions and comments. Please contact the township office or a township official with suggestions or topics of concern you would like addressed.