

SANDS TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

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

Website - <https://sandstownship.org> email - office@sandstownship.org

New Ways to Notify You

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Supervisor - Darlene Walch
249-9945

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

Sands Township has a new way to share important information, such as weather-related closings, with our residents. The township has partnered with Marquette County Central Dispatch and will use their notification system to set up users to receive texts, emails, and/or telephone calls when we have information we think is important for you to have.

To enroll in this service, please 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).

Please note that we will continue to include notifications on our website and Facebook page, as well.

Submitted by: Darlene Walch, Supervisor

Supervisor's Notes

Electronics Recycling:

Sands Township continues to host electronics recycling days for all Marquette County residents on the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Electronics included in this program are primarily communication and computer related. Unfortunately, items such as vacuum cleaners, toasters, and hairdryers are not included in the definition of electronics (see page 5 or our website for fees and additional information).

We also collect various types of batteries during electronics recycling. Batteries we accept include alkaline and rechargeable (AA, AAA, C, D and 9-volt), lithium and lithium-ion, and small lead-acid batteries. Batteries (except alkaline AA and AAA) must be taped before being recycled. Instructions for how to prepare batteries for recycling can be found at www.recycle906.com/types-of-batteries. Please help us keep batteries out of our landfill – batteries put into the trash and disposed of improperly at the landfill have resulted in costly fires.

The township's grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) enables us to participate in a transportation network to move collected electronics to other recycling centers for processing. The program has been very successful! Following the kick-off event in June, we shipped nearly eight **tons** of electronics for recycling, and still had 15 more pallets of computers, monitors, printers, and TVs that did not fit on the first semi-truck. We are impressed with participation so far and hope to recycle several more tons of electronics over the next year.

Submitted by: Darlene Walch, Supervisor

Treasurer's News

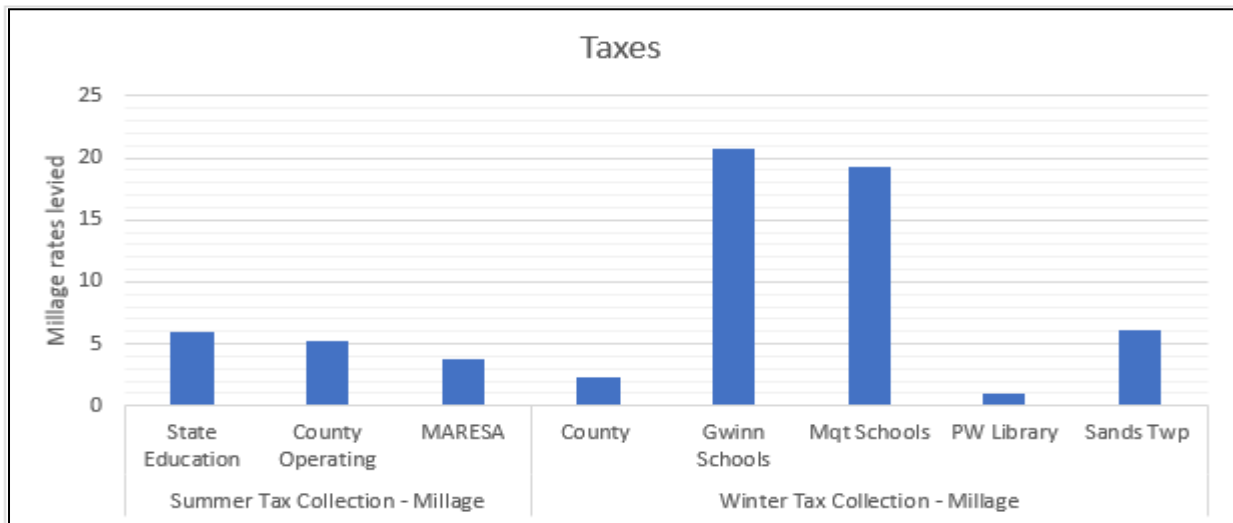
Winter 2023 property tax statements were mailed on December 1, 2023, and are due to the Sands Township Treasurer on February 14, 2024, to avoid interest or penalties. Beginning February 15, 2023, a 3% additional penalty will be assessed on unpaid summer and winter tax bills.

- If you have not received your tax statement or if your statement went to your escrow company and you would like a copy, call the township office at 906-249-9169.
- Please allow 7-10 days for mailed payments to arrive. Postmarked dates are not accepted.
- Beginning March 1, 2024, all unpaid summer or winter taxes plus interest/penalties must be submitted directly to the county treasurer's office.

On or before February 29, 2024, residents may pay their taxes online using the secure AllPaid website. A 2.95% transaction fee applies for payments made using VISA, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover. To pay online, visit the Sands Township website at sandstownship.org and click the **Tax Credit Card Payment** tab.



See the following for a breakdown of where your tax dollars go:



| Break down for MARESA: | | Break down for County: | | Break down for Schools: | | Break down for Sands Twp: | |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------|-------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| ISD | 0.2030 | Co Transit | 0.5970 | Gwinn: | | Marquette: | |
| ISD Extra Voted | 1.5000 | Co Aging | 0.4431 | Operating | 18.0000 | Operating | 18.0000 |
| Special ED | 2.0000 | Co MOE | 0.5448 | Debt | 0.4200 | Bond | 0.4200 |
| TOTAL | 3.7030 | Co Dispatch | 0.4923 | Debt 2 | 0.8500 | Sinking Fund | 0.9336 |
| | | Co Rescue | 0.1510 | Sinking Fund | 1.5000 | TOTAL | 19.3536 |
| | | Co Vet AFF | 0.0990 | TOTAL | 20.7700 | | |
| | | TOTAL | 2.3272 | | | | |
| | | | | | | Operating | 1.9831 |
| | | | | | | Fire | 0.8704 |
| | | | | | | Ambulance | 0.4349 |
| | | | | | | Roads | 1.7415 |
| | | | | | | Garbage | 1.0000 |
| | | | | | | TOTAL | 6.0299 |

Please note, a Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) exempts a residence from the tax levied by a local school district for school operating purposes up to 18 mills.

Election News from the Clerk

Election Updates and Early Voting

With the passing of Proposal 22-2 in November 2022, there are many changes to elections in 2024. The biggest change is the ways in which voters can cast ballots. In Michigan, there are now four ways to vote:

1. In Person on Election Day – As in the past, voters can vote in person on election day. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and all Sands Township voters may vote on election day at the Sands Township Hall, 987 S. State Highway M-553, Gwinn.
2. Absentee Ballot – You may request an absentee ballot online, by mail, by emailing the clerk (clerk@sandstowship.org), by phone at 906-249-9169, or through the clerk's office. Once your application is received, your ballot will be mailed to you. Voters on the Permanent Absentee List are automatically mailed an application prior to each election. Ballots may be returned by mail, in person at the township office, or in the drop box located outside the township office. The locked and secured ballot drop box is under video surveillance and ballots are retrieved daily.
3. Permanent Ballot List – New with Proposal 22-2, you may now submit a one-time application requesting to be added to this list, and for each election going forward, you will automatically be mailed a ballot if you are on this list. No additional applications are needed.
4. Early In-Person Voting – Also new with Proposal 22-2, early voting will be available for every statewide and federal election. Early in-person voting allows voters to cast a ballot in person for nine consecutive days of early voting, ending on the Sunday before election day. Sands Township is partnering with other neighboring municipalities and Sands Township's early voting site will be at the Chocolay Township Office located at 5010 US 41 S, Marquette, MI 49855. For the 2024 Presidential Primary, early voting will be held from Saturday, February 17 through Sunday, February 25 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

If you have questions regarding this information or wish to change how you are currently voting, please contact Carolyn Kerkela, Clerk, by calling or texting 906-361-0630, by leaving a message at the township office, or by emailing clerk@sandstowship.org.

2024 will be a busy election year with a lot of changes. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we navigate these changes together and continue to provide safe and secure elections for Sands Township that are conducted with integrity and in accordance with all legal requirements.

- To request an absentee ballot online, view your ballot, track your absentee ballot status, or to learn more about the candidates and voting in Michigan, go to www.sos.gov/vote.
- If you are interested in working as an election inspector, applications are available at the office.

Submitted by: Carolyn Kerkela, Clerk

2024 Election Dates

Presidential Primary

- Election Day: February 27
- Early Voting: February 17-25

Primary Election

- Election Day: August 6
- Early Voting: July 27-August 4

General Election

- Election Day: November 5
- Early Voting: October 26-November 3

Sands Township Recreational Facilities Millage Request

On the February 27 Presidential Primary ballot, residents will see a request for a millage proposal for equipment, maintenance, and operations of township recreational facilities. This request, although labeled an increase in the millage language, is to restore a voter-approved millage for township recreation facilities that expired in 2022 and was not collected in the 2023 tax year. The request is for 0.4688 mills (\$0.4688 per \$1,000 of taxable value), which is the same rate as the previous millage. If approved, these funds will go towards maintaining, operating, and updating township recreation facilities including the township park and playground, the gym, and the Strawberry Lake recreation area.

Fire Department Updates

Smoke Alarm and CO Detector Program:

The Sands Township Volunteer Fire Department (STFD) still has smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors that are available to township residents **free of charge**. To receive alarms, they must be installed by a member of STFD and documented with the Michigan Prevention database. Contact the Sands Township Fire Department at 906-249-4336 for more information or to schedule an installation.

Personnel Update:

The Sands Township Volunteer Fire Department voted on two new members in the fall of 2023. The two new members will serve in the role of probationary firefighters until they complete their Firefighter 1 & 2 certification and go through the department's probationary period. The township is always looking for additional firefighters and EMS personnel - contact the township office for an application or more information.

Fire Department Officers:

In a recent meeting, the Sands Township Volunteer Fire Department elected the following officers for 2024-2025:

- Fire Chief - Tom Wahlstrom
- Assistant Chief - Andrew Sicotte
- Assistant Chief - Andrew Linsmeier
- Captain - Greg Orchard
- Training Officer - Frank Rosado
- Asst. Training Officer - Pat Mager
- Secretary - Tim Reeves

Other:

- In 2023, the STFD became a member of the Upper Peninsula Volunteer Firefighter's Association.
- At the end of July, Sands Township Fire Department participated in the 128th Annual UP Fireman's Tournament for the first time. Fire Department members participated in the Dress Parade and Commercial Parade, and department members are looking forward to participating in a larger capacity in 2024.

Peter White Public Library News

As the new year begins, let's recognize a few of the many people and groups who make Peter White Public Library (PWPL) so special.

The Director of PWPL is Andrea Ingmire. Her job is all encompassing as she oversees the staff, works closely with the Board, leads all updates of policies, and works to ensure the library is meeting its overall mission. Andrea is tireless and recently was chosen as the "2023 Librarian of the Year" for our region. You can sit down for an informal chat with Andrea on the first Tuesday of each month between 11 a.m. and Noon or in the afternoon from 5 to 6 p.m. Don't forget the friendly, knowledgeable staff who help us all with questions, research, and programs.

The PWPL Board consists of five local people and the library Director. They meet once per month and their meeting dates and minutes of their meetings are all available on the PWPL website. The Board oversees the budget, policy revisions, and oversight of all library business and issues.

The Township Advisory Council (TAC) consists of the library Director and two representatives from each of five townships that support the library through

millages. TAC members act as liaisons between PWPL and their Township Boards. TAC meets quarterly. Sands Township is represented by Kerrie Heikes and Suzanne Standerford. They can be reached through the Township Office.

The Friends of PWPL is a group of local volunteers who oversee book donations, organize/run used book sales, and created/run the used bookstore on the main floor of the library. In 2023 the Friends earned and donated over \$50,000 to the library's operating funds. The used bookstore is one of my favorite places. Come browse the wealth of books of all types for purchase at low prices.

These are only a few of the many people who work hard to make your library an exciting place full of resources, programs, events, meeting rooms, book clubs, and much more. Come take a look around and be sure to thank these people when you encounter them in the building or in the community. You might even ask how you can become more involved in such a terrific public resource!

Submitted by: N. Suzanne Standerford, TAC Representative

Sanitation News and Reminders

- Have your garbage out by 4 a.m. - we start early!
- Wash or rinse your trash can as needed, and replace cans that are cracked or broken.
- If animals get into your garbage, it is your responsibility to clean it up.
- Large items and bags weighing more than 30 pounds cannot be taken.
- Our garbage crew will not 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.

Landfill Hours

The Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority (MCSWMA) (landfill) hours are:

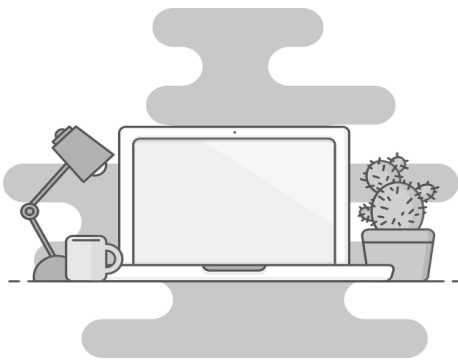
- December 1 through March 31
7 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- April 1 through November 30
6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

| 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 |

Electronics Recycling Hours and Fees:

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

- 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



In 2023, Sands Township had 4332 unique visits by residents to the Recycling and Transfer Station to drop off plastic, paper, metal and glass recycling!



TOWNSHIP INFORMATION

Stay in Touch with Sands Township

Check out our website at <https://sandstownship.org> for the latest township information. Here you will find draft board minutes, zoning information, the transfer and recycle station schedule, facility rental information, and a News Page 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, and/or phone calls from the township.

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 is required to meet at least four times per year. Meetings occur on the third Tuesday of the month.

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 always looking for people to join our fire department and EMS.

Contact the office if you are interested in any of 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.sandstowship.org

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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.