

the Cannon Communicator

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TOWNSHIP BUDGET FOR 1995-96

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS

Once again, as has been our practice in the past, we have developed a very conservative budget which dedicates the majority of our tax revenues to the road program or public safety issues. Below you will find the highlights of next year's budget.

• Most of the General Property Tax Revenue for the Township, a total of \$197,000, will be dedicated to the Highway Fund for the construction of new roads. Projects under consideration include:

- Construction of an access road at the Township Center directly out to Myers Lake Avenue. This access will include a landing area for the AeroMed Helicopter.
- Reconstruction of 5 Mile Road with paving and other improvements.
- Application of dustlayers, road repairs and maintenance.

• We will continue to contract with the Kent County Sheriff's Department for extra police patrols. This additional law enforcement program has proven to be very successful and has had a significant positive impact on our community. This program began two years ago and was funded by savings from staff reductions and cuts in other areas.

• Most departmental budgets are increasing by approximately 3-5 percent.

• We have created a category for Parks and Recreation of \$4,000 for the possibility of building an ice rink next winter

• We have budgeted \$50,000 for our Kent County Library Assessment because the timing of the KCLS millage did not allow for its collection as originally planned by the County.

• We have budgeted \$25,000 to cover litigation expenses involved in the lawsuits of Former Treasurer Donna Cline and Art Spalding (Cornerstone Investments).

- Former Treasurer Cline sued the Township two years ago over a dispute involving access to Township information.
- Mr. Spalding (a Grand Rapids attorney) and his partners in Cornerstone Investments are suing the Township over our policy of having the developer rather than our residents cover the cost involved in reviews of real estate development projects. Mr. Spalding is challenging our ability to have the cost of planners, engineers, attorneys and other expenses reimbursed by the developer rather than paid for by our existing residents. This policy has been in place for several years and requires the developer to carry the financial burden of their development, rather than placing this burden on the taxpayers of the Township.
- We have budgeted a Contingency of \$40,000 or 4.25%.
- In the fire Department Budget we

have allocated \$130,000 for improvements to Station 1 in Cannonsburg. This station which is vital to serving the south part of the Township has needed repairs for many years. Also in the Fire Department we have placed \$30,000 in savings for future fire equipment.

• In the Sewer Budget we are planning approximately \$250,000 in repairs to the system including replacing two small lift stations, sewer main on Belding Road and repairs to the pumps at the Township's primary lift station. The pumps, pipes and sewer infrastructure have been working for over twenty years and repairs are necessary to bring the equipment back to design standards. Part of the cost for these projects will be shared with Courtland Township.

Copies of the actual budget are available at the Township Hall for your review. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact a member of the Township Board.

John Weiss
Supervisor



NEW VOTER REGISTRATION LAW

Beginning January 1st, the National Voter Registration Act (NRVA) took effect. Among other things, this law allows voter registration by mail. Before this law took effect, you had to register in person. We were not allowed to let you take registration forms out of the office to fill out at home or to give to your husband, wife, neighbor, etc. Now you are allowed to do so. Also, you can just call the office and we can send you a form.

Although this sounds like a great idea, there are two drawbacks. As of this date, the township has not yet received any of the mail-in forms which are supposed to be provided by the state. Also, if you choose to register by mail, you must vote in person (not by absentee ballot) at the first election after you have registered. This could pose a hardship for some people, especially college students. The Kent County Clerks' Association is trying to lobby for some changes to that requirement. I'll keep you posted.

WHERE OH WHERE DO I VOTE?

At the recent school election we found out that a **LARGE** percentage of the township population is confused about where they vote for an election. So if you were one of those who came to the Township Center on March 14 and were directed to go elsewhere, feel relieved to know that you were not the only one.

Just a reminder, at any election to do with **schools** -school millage votes and school board elections - you will vote at either Lakes Elementary School or Rockford Middle School (unless Rockford Schools change their polling places) if you are in the **Rockford School District** and live in Cannon Township. Absentee ballots are distributed at the Administration Offices at 350 N. Main in the City of Rockford.

Some Cannon Township residents live in Lowell or Forest Hills School Districts. I'm not familiar with your particular polling place, but it is not at the Township Center. You can call your school district to find out.

At **municipal** elections - federal, state, or local government - you will vote at either the Township Center (Precincts 1 and 2) or Bella Vista Church (Precincts 3 and 4). These elections are run by the Township Clerk. When in doubt, please don't hesitate to call the township to find out where to vote.

We don't anticipate any township-run elections in 1995. The next one should be the Presidential Primary in 1996. Rockford Schools has a regularly scheduled election for school board members in June. Please exercise your right to vote!

Bonnie Shupe, Clerk

From The Treasurer's Office

The first year of property tax collection under Proposal A has passed. As expected, there were many questions, answers and revised answers raised and dealt with. For most property owners the process was simply filing your Homestead Exemption and then receiving a substantially reduced tax bill compared to last year. Some property owners required more specialized handling, and after telephone calls and letters their tax bills were revised and/or corrected. A small portion of property owners had particular problems that are still not totally resolved and must be settled at the State level.

One question that has been frequently asked is "Do we have to file a Homestead Exemption each year?" The answer is no. You only have to file again if the property is sold, split, transferred or changes ownership. Homestead Exemption forms are available at the Township offices.

There are bills introduced in the State Legislature to have only one yearly property tax collection time. This would eliminate the present option of the school districts to collect taxes in the summer and the winter. The proposed one time collection may or may not coincide with either the present summer or winter collection time. Stay tuned for further information on these plans.

Milissa and I would like to thank everyone for your patience and understanding when you would call for information and had questions on your tax bill. We try to have the latest information available from the County and State but at times the changes coming to us were being issued daily and sometimes the changes reversed previous changes! So if we became confused at times, we understand how confusing it was to everyone who had questions. After Proposal A was passed, Senator Posthumus stated that he believed that it would take two years for the dust to settle on the procedural questions and collection. I believe he will be right. In the meantime, we will do our best to give you the latest information in answer to your questions should you have them.

Daniel Barker, Treasurer

Milissa Soderstrom, Deputy Treasurer

SPRING CLEANING TIME FOR BELLA VISTA ROADS

If you live along one of the streets at Lake Bella Vista which was seal-coated last year, now is the time to start sweeping the gravel off your driveways and lawns. According to the Kent County Road Commission, the streets which were coated last year will be dusted this spring, probably in early April. So get out those brooms and rakes and get that sand and gravel out of your lawns and into the street!

Remember - this is only for the following streets which were seal-coated last year: Aqua Vista Ct., Bella Vista, Bonaire Ct., Bonaire, Bonita Vista Ct., Buena Vista Ct., Encantado Ct., and Verde Vista. Also, please leave only sand and gravel in the streets - no grass or leaves.



New Burning Ordinance Takes Effect

Due to a new state law which recently took effect, burning grass clippings and leaves in any municipality with a population of 7,500 or more is now prohibited. This includes Cannon Township which has a population of approximately 8,000 according to the 1990 census. The only exception to this law is when specifically authorized by local ordinance.

In response, Cannon Township officials asked for input from various neighborhood associations and came up with a compromise ordinance which should be acceptable to everyone. The restrictions placed on burning leaves and grass clippings are:

1. Burning will be allowed on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from the hours of 9:00a.m. until 6:00p.m. during the last two weeks of October and the first two weeks of November.
2. A permit, either verbal or written, must be obtained from the Fire Department.
3. Someone over the age of 18 must be in attendance at the fire at all times.
4. Violators will be guilty of a civil infraction and faced with a fine.

This ordinance does not include the burning of brush, which is not affected by the state ordinance. Remember, a burning permit is required before doing any open burning in the township. Please call Chief Morris at 874-6056 for permission to burn.

AFTER THE MASTER PLAN

Approximately one year ago the new Comprehensive (master) Plan was adopted by the planning commission as a guide for the Township to use for future planning for land and infrastructure decisions.

A Sub-committee was formed consisting of 3 Board Members, 2 Planning Commission Members, Township Planner, Attorney and Zoning Administrator to begin the process of modifying the current ordinances in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. The people on the Sub-Committee are, Jim Alles (chairperson), Dan Barker, Dick Davies, Chuck Bloom, Jim La Peer, Tim Johnson, Jim Brown, and Chris James.

Starting in 1994 this sub-committee has been meeting approximately every 3rd Wednesday from 5-7 to review and propose changes to such items as: Site Plan Review Process, Zoning for Agricultural and Residential Districts, R-1, R-2, R-3, Lakes Residential, C-1, C-2, I-1, Village Commercial, Conservation. P.U.D., General Provisions, Signs, Site Condos, and ZBA and Non-conforming Uses.

The Current estimate for completion of the work by this sub-committee is August 30th, at which time these will be presented to the full Township Board, followed by the required public hearings and final adoption of the Township Board by year end 1995. I would like to thank everyone on the sub-committee for the long days they have been spending on this project and the open and fair discussions during these meetings.

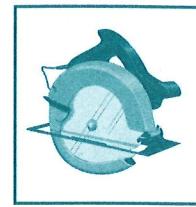
Dick Davies, Trustee

BEAR CREEK UPDATE

Due to an automobile accident last November, the Bear Creek Project Manager, Patricia VanDyke, has been unable to resume her responsibilities. Although she is recovering, the process is slow, and Cannon Township has had to look elsewhere for a manager to keep the project on schedule.

At this time we are in the process of negotiating a contract with the Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State University to provide a Project Manager and carry out the tasks associated with the management plan. We are making every attempt to preserve the integrity of the plan which, according to Janice Tompkins from the DNR, is one of the most creative they have seen.

Some of the local residents have been very involved in the continuation of Pat's work. The members of CACEA - including Bob Schirado, Priscilla Johnson, Linda Scott, and Don Osborn - have been working with the Bear Creek Citizen's Committee headed by Shelly Yeager to continue the tradition of the Bear Creek Waterfest at Townsend Park. Many people have called to volunteer time, local businesses are offering donations, and other community groups are participating in this event. (See related article.) It is encouraging to see so much enthusiasm in Cannon Township.



Home Repair Services

According to Tom Pearce, Director of the North Kent Service Center in Rockford, a new program has been initiated. Numerous household tools are available for loan to low-income clients. For a refundable deposit of \$5.00 you can borrow a ladder, wheelbarrow, skill saw, drill, or many other tools.

Gene Van Stedum, North Kent Tool Coordinator, says the hours at the North Kent Service Center for this program are Monday and Thursday 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., and Wednesday from 12:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Call 866-8181 for more information.

Second Annual Waterfest

Mark your calendars now. Saturday, April 29th from 7:00a.m. until 2:00p.m. at Townsend Park is the place to be for lots of fun and educational opportunities.

Beginning at 7:00a.m. with a birdwalk, the day will involve several speakers on environmental topics, duck races, contests, drawings, and seedling give-a-ways. The Cannonsburg Christmas Light Committee will be providing a pancake breakfast from 7:30a.m. until 11:00a.m. and lunch from 11:30a.m. until 2:00p.m.

Cannonsburg school children will be selling wildflower seeds. The historical society will have baked goods and a "Name the Owl" contest. The day will culminate with a Wetland Clean-up. More information is available at the Township Center. Call 874-6966.

WHAT TO DO FOR YARD WASTE

With the passage of a state law restricting the burning of leaves and grass clippings, and eliminating sending these items to landfills, people are asking, "What do we do now?" Here are a few suggestions:

1. Mulch your grass clippings - use a mulching blade on your lawn mower, and leave the clippings on your yard. The finely cut grass becomes a free source of fertilizer, providing nitrogen to your soil. This may possibly require mowing more frequently, but it eliminates costly disposition of these waste materials.
2. If mulching is not a good solution in your case, there are waste haulers who provide curbside pick up. They take the materials to a commercial composting site for processing.
3. Compost your leaves! Composting yard waste can provide wonderful soil enhancements for your garden or planting area. Home composters are available for purchase at area garden supply outlets. Another option is to build your own. Plans are available from the MSU Extension office on Fuller. There are a number of books available at area book stores on composting. They too include plans and offer a wealth of information regarding the subject.
4. Small gasoline engine chippers are also available at yard equipment stores. They are used for chipping and shredding small brush and branches. The shredded material can also be placed in the compost bin for decomposition.

George Scott, Trustee

Update on Five Mile Road



Work has begun by the Kent County Road Commission the reconstruction of 5 Mile Road. The project is east of Egypt Valley to approximately Dursum Avenue.

Gabian baskets, wire mesh baskets filled with rocks, have been placed along the water's edge of Hyser Lake. This allows the road bed to be widened to meet the county standards.

Tree removal has also begun where necessary to bring the road width up to county standards.

Black topping will not begin until the asphalt paving business opens later this spring.

The reconstruction and paving of 5 Mile Road will represent the accomplishment of one of the major goals of the Road Committee, that of paving all significant dirt roads in the Township. The project should be completed by late spring.

*George Scott,
Road Committee Chairman*

From Your Fire Department

Cannon Township Fire Department responded to 359 alarms in 1994. This is a 18.5% increase over 1993. Of these alarms, 32 were structure fires, 35 wild land fires, 6 vehicle fires, 151 medicals, 76 vehicle accidents and 59 other emergency and nonemergency calls. The department covered these alarms from their two stations (St. #1 at Cannonsburg Road and Honey Creek Road and St. #2 at Belding Road and Myers Lake Road) which house the Department's 10 units which are manned by 20 paid on call fire fighters.

The Department's 20 members went through an intensive year of training. Not only did they participate in the Department's regular 48 hours of ongoing training, but they also took 4 hours of updated training for their operational level certificate from the State of Michigan for Hazardous Materials. The rescue members also went through several hours of medical training in a course offered around the County. Fire Fighters Alan Graham, Steve Hoving and Brian Morris completed their State of Michigan fire fighter II (132 hours) in April. Terry Scott started his Fire Fighter II Class in October and will complete his in April of this year. New Fire Fighters Bill



Hovarter and Rowlf Hawkins will finish their classes in May of this year.

1994 was the busiest year ever for Cannon Township Fire Department which increased activity at all levels. The department did a great job in 1994 with no injuries, and expect a busy 1995. They look forward to receiving great support from the citizens of Cannon Township.

Citizens Advisory Committee for Environmental Affairs (CACEA)

This committee is made up of township residents who work with the Planning Commission to deal with environmental issues. New members are needed. Interested? Call the Township Center (874-6966)



CANNON TOWNSHIP
6878 Belding Road, NE
Rockford, MI 49341

TOWNSHIP BOARD

Supervisor John Weiss
Clerk Bonnie Shupe
Treasurer Dan Barker
Trustees Thom Longcore
Jim Alles
Dick Davies
George Scott
Township Offices 874-6966
Fax 874-8940

Township Board Meetings
2nd & 4th Monday, Monthly
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