



3848 VETERANS DRIVE / TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49684  
(231) 941-1620 / FAX: (231) 941-1588  
www.garfield-twp.com ~ updated frequently!

SUMMER 2015

# Garfield

## Charter Township

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

### TOWNSHIP HOURS

Monday —Thursday

7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

CLOSED FRIDAYS

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE \*\***

Tax payment receipts will only be sent upon request or if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included with payment.

### ELECTED OFFICIALS

- CHUCK KORN.....SUPERVISOR
- LANIE MC MANUS.....CLERK
- JEANE BLOOD LAW.....TREASURER
- BOB FEATHERSTONE.....TRUSTEE
- DENISE SCHMUCKAL.....TRUSTEE
- KIT WILSON.....TRUSTEE
- MOLLY AGOSTINELLI.....TRUSTEE

### STAFF

- LISA RITTER.....OFFICE COORDINATOR
- BETTY TEZAK.....DEPUTY CLERK
- CHLOE MACOMBER..DEPUTY TREASURER
- AMY DEHAAN.....ASSESSOR
- KRISTEN STEGER.....ASST.ASSASSOR
- SUE MUHA.....APPRAISER
- HILARY ALPERS.....ASSESSING CLERK  
AND TREASURER'S ASSISTANT
- CARL STUDZINSKI.....BUILDING OFFICIAL
- RICH DERKS.....BUILDING INSPECTOR
- ROB LARREA.....PLANNING DIRECTOR
- BRIAN VANDENBRAND....DEP. PLANNER
- SARA KOPRIVA..ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
- THOM SCHMUCKAL.....ZONING CODE  
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER
- JUDY BATTLE.....ADMIN. ASSISTANT
- BILL MOUSER.....BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

### FROM THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The average trip inside a store to grab a few things—about 15-20 minutes or so—can leave your pets vulnerable to the intense heat inside your parked car. According to weather experts, the temperature inside your car can rise almost 30° while you are inside shopping. A parked car can quickly turn into an oven, in the sun or the shade. Never leave a dog in a parked car. Even on a mild 73°F day, with a window cracked open 1", the temperature inside a car parked in the sun can reach a sweltering 105°F in 30 minutes. On a 90°F day, the interior of a vehicle can reach a staggering 125°F in 30 minutes.



During warm weather months, GT County Deputies handle numerous complaints of dogs left alone in parked vehicles. It is a violation of Michigan law if you fail to provide adequate care for your pet by leaving them in an excessively warm vehicle. A person who violates the law can be charged with a misdemeanor, which is punishable with imprisonment for not more than 93 days, a fine of not more than \$1,000.00 and community service for not more than 200 hours. Please think twice before bringing your pet with you on errands around town and exercise good judgment.

-Lieutenant Barsheff—GT Sheriff's Office

### BURNING IN GARFIELD

Happy Summer to all the Garfield Township Citizens from your fire department! It's been a busy year so far and our runs are up 3.4%. The 89 dedicated employees at the fire department stand ready to serve you with a smile and great customer service.

It was a dry spring and we have had numerous grass fires; thankfully nothing too serious. With so many people calling about burning regulations, I thought I would reiterate how the open burning regulations work in Garfield Township. First of all, recreational campfires in established fires rings, portable outdoor fireplaces and other containment devices ARE ALLOWED WITH NO PERMIT so long as the fire is kept to a maximum size of 3 feet around and no higher than 2 feet of flame height. These fires must be a minimum of 25 feet from a structure or adjoining property or any other potentially combustible items to which the fire could spread. Only dry hardwood fuels may be used which do not produce noxious smoke conditions. Yard and construction waste is not allowed. Agricultural burning from tree farming and ceremonial bonfires may be allowed after fire officials determine appropriateness after a permit process. The fire department asks people to use common sense. Permits can be accessed at [www.gtmetrofire.org](http://www.gtmetrofire.org).

While it is not illegal yet, garbage burn barrels do not provide good combustion. The smoke emitted consists of a number of chemicals that can be irritating or even harmful. Chemicals commonly detected in burn barrel smoke include dioxins, benzene, styrene, formaldehyde, furans, PCBs, lead, mercury, and arsenic. It becomes illegal when trash burning creates a smoke or odor nuisance. Who can decide that? Only you and your neighbor. Be smart, be safe!

-Chief Pat Parker—GT Metro Fire Dept.

### FROM THE ZONING DEPARTMENT

We'd like to remind our residents that short term rentals are not allowed in Garfield Township. A short term rental is defined as any rental that is less than 30 days in length. We will be actively enforcing any violations of the Zoning Ordinance for this violation as well as other Township Ordinances such as the Property Maintenance Ordinance that requires owners of properties under 2 acres to maintain their lawns. If a lawn is found to be longer than 10 inches in length, a letter will be sent to the occupant and/or property owner asking for compliance prior to further enforcement. While we do have an Ordinance Enforcement Officer, if you think there is a violation of any Township Ordinance, feel free to contact the Zoning Department at (231) 941-1620.

**BUSINESS OWNERS**

Any changes to signs, whether a new sign or face replacement, requires a sign permit prior to installation of the sign. Sign companies should know that permits are required prior to installation but it's the business owners' responsibility to be sure that proper permits are pulled. Failure to obtain a sign permit prior to installation will force the fee to be doubled for the required permits. If you have questions about when a sign permit is required, contact the Zoning Department.

**PLEASE TAKE OUR MASTER PLAN SURVEY**

The Planning Commission is working to create a new Master Plan. A Master Plan is a planning document that establishes growth management goals, policies, and strategies for the Township, and can be used by the Planning Commission when making land use decisions for the Township. We greatly appreciate your valuable time in completing this survey. Your opinions are vital to the Master Plan Process.

Take the survey online by visiting the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GarfieldTownship>.

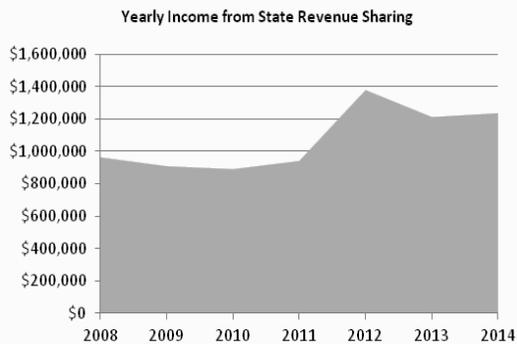
**PARK RESERVATIONS**

The Silver Lake Recreation Area has three pavilions available for parties, birthdays, family reunions, graduation open houses, etc. Please call ahead to make sure the date you need is available. Call (231) 941-1620 for more information.

**DOG PARK REMINDER**

Please note: the dog park at the Silver Lake Recreation Area is for the enjoyment of DOGS ONLY! Allowing children within the dog park is against park rules not only because of potential injuries, but because it is unfair to dogs and their owners who may face liability if a child is hurt. Please enjoy the other 82-acres with your children and leave the 2-acre dog park for our four-legged friends. Thanks!

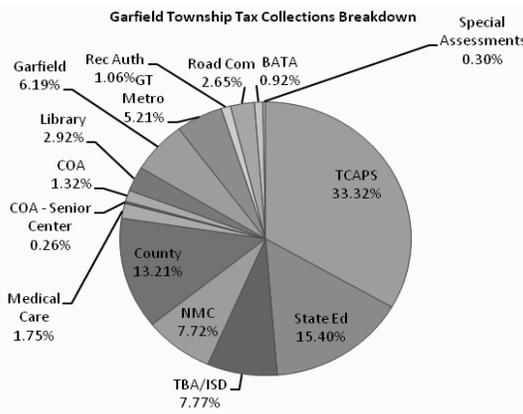
**FROM THE TOWN BOARD—INCREASES IN STATE REVENUE**



Revenue sharing comes from the State of Michigan's 6% sales tax levied on goods and services sold. A portion of the total amount collected is divided up and dispersed to Michigan cities, villages, and townships. This money is earmarked by the Michigan State Constitution and State Statute to help pay for core governmental services such as police protection, fire service, roads, water, and sewer services. In 2014 Garfield Township's State Shared Revenue was \$1,233,887.00; this was a 2% increase from 2013. Overall, State Revenue Sharing has increased 28.32% since 2008.

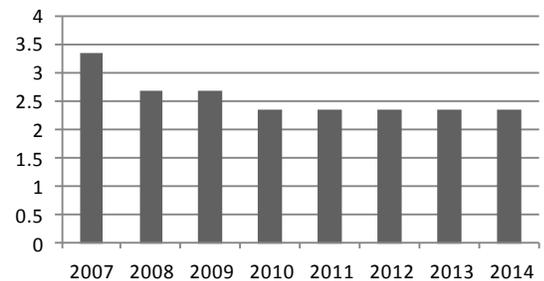
Township revenue was up 4.5% from 2013 to 2014, and expenses were also up in 2014 due to the Township setting aside money for road projects. With rising property values and an increase in State Shared Revenue we were able to set aside \$700,000 that was expensed from our fund balance and transferred to our road fund. This year we will be using some of that money to partner with the Grand Traverse Road Commission in the reconstruction of the Lafranier Hill, Barlow, and S. Airport intersection. We will also be assisting Forestlane Subdivision in a shared cost arrangement to redo the subdivision's road, and the balance will be set aside for current and future road projects. Residents who live in a subdivision that has a road nearing the end of its life, may be eligible for matching contributions from the GT County Road Commission, and Garfield Township to be used for new road construction. Requests and inquiries can be made to Chuck Korn, Township Supervisor at (231) 941-1620 or by email to [ckorn@garfield-twp.com](mailto:ckorn@garfield-twp.com).

**WHERE DO YOUR TAXES GO?**



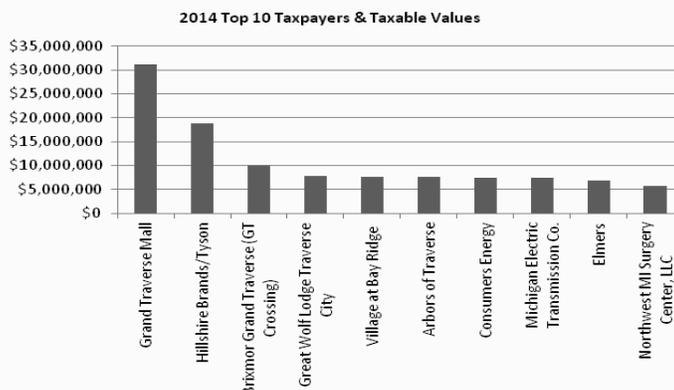
Where do your property tax payments go? The pie chart shows the breakdown of where your property tax payments are actually going. Only 6.19% of the tax monies collected by Garfield Township actually stays within the township. The rest is divided and distributed between the other various taxing authorities.

**Garfield Township Millage Rate History**



Garfield Township has reduced its millage rate two times in the last ten years. The millage rate was lowered from 3.3358 mills to 2.6744 mills in 2008. It was lowered again in 2011, to 2.3372 mills; its lowest rate in the last 14 years.

**TOP TAXPAYERS & TAXABLE VALUES**



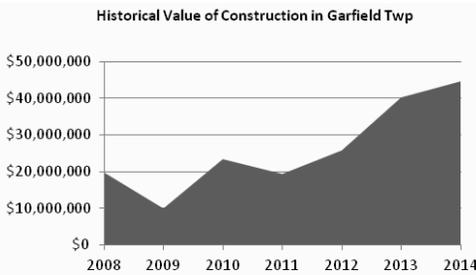
The Grand Traverse Mall continues to be the highest tax payer, with the highest taxable value in Garfield Township, for the past five years. Hillshire/Tyson, Grand Traverse Crossing, Great Wolf Lodge and the Arbors of Traverse City follow as the next largest taxpayers. Both Hillshire/Tyson and the Arbors are currently under expansion which will likely result in higher taxable values in the near future.

## JOINT HOUSING TASK FORCE

A joint housing task force was formed in 2014, which included representatives from Grand Traverse County, Garfield Township, the City of Traverse City, and East Bay Township. The task force has met several times between October, 2014 and April, 2015. The purpose of creating this task force was to address the growing need for all types of housing in our community. Grand Traverse County's population has been increasing at a rate of approximately 1000 new residents each year. The current rental occupancy rate is 98%, which will not accommodate the projected increases in population. Here at Garfield, we recognize the potential shortage, and our Board and Planning Commission have approved, and are reviewing, several projects that will assist our growing need for housing. Some of the housing projects currently under construction are the Arbors of Traverse, Brookside Commons, Boardman Lake Apartments, and a number of new, single family residential homes throughout the township. Garfield Township understands that by working together, and bringing interested parties from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, we can address the common housing goals for our residents. We also know that for Garfield Township businesses to attract and retain employees, we will need housing options that are favorable to all income levels.

New Commercial Construction	
Project	Cost
Arbors of Traverse	\$ 9,500,000
Brookside Commons	\$ 8,700,000
Boardman Lake Apts.	\$ 5,700,000
Cherry Capital Foods	\$ 1,500,000
Northwest MI Surgery Center	\$ 980,000
The Barns of GT Commons	\$ 827,000

## NEW CONSTRUCTION VALUES

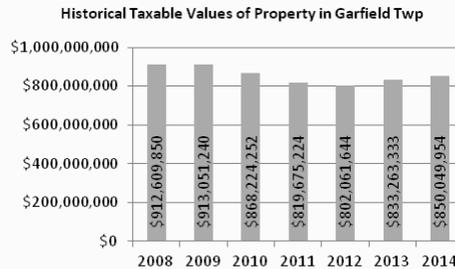


The total value of new construction in the Township for 2014 was \$44,489,420, which was a 10.8% increase from 2013. This is well above Garfield's historical average of \$26,146,553 for the last ten years. Some of these construction projects include the Arbors of Traverse, Brookside Commons and Boardman Lake; all new housing projects. 2014 also saw ongoing construction around the Grand Traverse Commons area and for the Northwest Michigan Surgery Center. New commercial

construction for 2014 makes up \$18,751,782 of the total construction value, while \$10,924,244 was in single family homes, and \$14,813,394 was in commercial and residential alterations and miscellaneous permits. As the area continues to develop, Garfield residents will continue to see many new construction projects coming in 2015, such as the new Carmike Cinema that is currently underway.

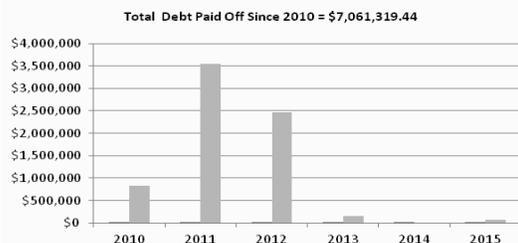
## HISTORICAL TAXABLE VALUES

Following the recession in 2008, taxable values in Garfield Township began a downward trend. Through 2012 values had decreased by 17%, which caused taxes to decrease by roughly the same amount. In 2013 there was a light at the end of the tunnel, and taxable values began to rise again. By the end of 2014, taxable values had rebounded nearly 6% from 2012. With construction on the rise and the economy heading in the right direction, taxable values will likely continue to increase each year by slightly more than the Consumer Price Index.



## REDUCING DEBT: OUR LONG-TERM PLAN

The \$7 million debt reduction shown in the chart below is part of a long-term financial plan to keep Garfield Township strong and healthy, while maintaining quality services for our community. For each of the past seven years, we have looked for opportunities to reduce debt and to pay with cash for new projects. Our current debt load is approximately \$3.5 million—down from \$10.5 million in 2008. In 2015 and



2016, the Township will be involved in substantial water and sewer projects, and has set aside cash reserves to fund these projects. The current Garfield Township Board always keeps our residents in mind and understands that excess debt is not in the best interest of the Township's residents. The Board will continue to be fiscally responsible when spending our taxpayers' money.

## RECYCLE NEWS

Information about recycling in Grand Traverse County can be found under Resource Recovery on the GT County website.

Questions about what and where to recycle can be answered by calling the RecycleSmart Hotline at: 941-5555

Visit our Township website for the latest RecycleSmart e-Newsletter.

## DROP BOX AVAILABLE

Need to drop something off at our offices after hours? Residents can use the gray drop box located in front of the town hall under the covered entry way. Please use this box for dropping off tax payments, absentee applications, absentee ballots, etc. This box is secure and is checked daily.

## SUMMER TAX DEFERMENTS AVAILABLE

If you are 62 years of age or older, and/or totally disabled, and your gross household income was not over \$40,000 during the preceding calendar year, you may qualify for a deferment of your summer taxes.

This makes the summer taxes for your primary residence due on February 14, 2016, instead of September 14, 2015, which will give you more time to make payments with no late interest. If you have qualified in the past you will be receiving an application in the mail by July 1st, 2015. If you think you may qualify and did not receive an application in the mail, applications are available at the Treasurer's office. If you have any questions, contact the Treasurer's Office as soon as possible at 225-3168 or 225-3043. Winter deferments may be obtained at the GT County Treasurer's office.

## YARD WASTE PASSES

Garfield Township saves its residents hundreds of dollars by offering free Yard Waste Passes every Spring and Fall. Keep up the nice work and keep those beautiful yards free of unwanted debris. When the leaves begin to fall, watch for notices on our website for the next dates when Yard Waste Passes will be available.

### FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Property is selling in Garfield Township; it is selling quickly and values are rising! Great news if you are a seller, but not so great if you are a buyer. Changes in the market are the reason this office is required by the State to inspect EACH property in the township every five (5) years. We visit any property that sells too, which helps us analyze the market and put values on the other properties in the township.

With the uptick in the economy, you may be remodeling, adding space or doing general maintenance. If you've taken out building/plumbing/electrical/mechanical permits, you should definitely expect a visit! This is how we ensure that your property is accurately described and properly valued on the assessment roll.

If you haven't seen us around in a while, this might be your lucky year! However, it is possible that we were there when you weren't. In this case, you will find a short, yellow questionnaire hanging on your door. Simply complete it and mail it in! But, if you have questions, call or come see us! We want to help you understand how your property value is determined - we look forward to working with you!

### CONSUMERS INSTALLS NEW METERS

Consumers Energy is upgrading electric meter technology across the state for its 1.8 million electric customers through 2017. The technology being used will allow text-type messages to be sent from meters once per day, letting the company know how much energy has been used. The upgrades will virtually eliminate physical meter reads and estimated bills. Direct power outage notifications from meters to Consumers Energy will begin in 2016. Customers will also be able to go online to see their hourly energy use and predict what bills will be before they arrive. Garfield Twp. customers will receive blue postcard mailers from the company by early June, with meter upgrades occurring through July. For more info, please visit [www.consumersenergy.com/smartenergy](http://www.consumersenergy.com/smartenergy).



### PREVENT OAK WILT SPREAD

Oak Wilt, a non-native vascular wilt fungus that is fatal to red oaks, is present and spreading in Northern Michigan. Symptoms include sudden brown or reddish leaves, then rapid loss of leaves, typically in mid-summer. Oak Wilt, once established, spreads underground through the interconnected root systems of red oak trees. New infections can also begin when beetles spread spores from infected trees to healthy trees that are pruned or injured during the spring and early summer.

High value residential oaks may be treated with an injected chemical that protects individual trees, and will need repeating every two years. For homeowners, injection costs for yard trees might be a viable option. Prevention is far cheaper but not always possible, as nature has a role.

Oak Wilt is here to stay in Michigan. Human activity will most likely move the disease into previously unaffected stands as time goes on; however, Oak Wilt can be successfully managed and the oak forest resource will remain a part of our forested landscape. **Help prevent the spread of Oak Wilt by avoiding cutting or pruning red oak trees in the spring and summer.**

The DNR and Conservation District Foresters are trying to document the extent of Oak Wilt in Michigan. For more info, or if you suspect you may have Oak Wilt and would like it confirmed, contact the Michigan DNR Forest Health Program at (517) 284-5895 or [DNR-FRD-Forest-Health@michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-FRD-Forest-Health@michigan.gov).

### FROM PARKS AND RECREATION

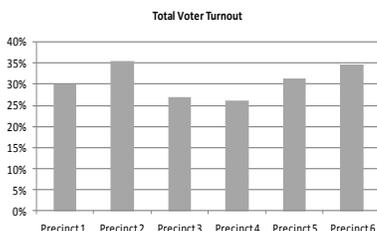
Did you know that the Township owns the tennis and pickleball courts next to the "Old Y" on the Boardman River? Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the country. It was originally popularized by the Boomer population, but has made the generational jump and is catching fire with people of all ages. Reservations are not required to use these courts, and you need not check in with the YMCA to use them. The Township is working with the Traverse Area Pickleball Club to rebuild the court next year, and will also budget to resurface the tennis courts. Enjoy!



### FROM THE CLERK'S OFFICE

**ELECTION WORKERS NEEDED:** Garfield Township's ultimate goal is to encourage greater voter participation and to conduct fair and honest elections. Interested in working at the next election? Election workers are fun, vibrant, civic minded people. If this sounds like you, and you are interested in becoming an election worker, please contact the Clerk's Office at (231) 941-1620, or visit our website at

[www.garfield-twp.com](http://www.garfield-twp.com). Go to Elections under the Clerk's page and print out an Election Worker Application. The next election will be in March of 2016. The graph at left shows voter turnout for our most recent election on May 5th of this year. Although participation is typically lower for Special Elections, just over 30% of Garfield Township voters turned out to voice their opinions on Proposal 1. We thank you for continuing to exercise your right to vote and look forward to serving you during the next election.



### 2015 BOARD MEETINGS

- June—9th & 23rd
- July—14th & 28th
- August—11th & 25th
- September—8th & 22nd
- October—13th & 27th
- November—10th & 24th
- December—8th & 22nd

All meetings begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. upstairs in the Township Hall. Meeting agendas, minutes and video can be viewed on the Township website.



Now accepting VISA, MasterCard, Discover & American Express!

Make your Tax Payments with credit card OR debit card by going online to the Township website: [www.garfield-twp.com](http://www.garfield-twp.com)

All credit card or debit card payments are subject to a 3% convenience fee. Payment services provided by Point & Pay, LLC

### HOLIDAY HOURS

Township offices will be closed for the observance of the following federal holidays for 2015:  
Independence Day—July 2  
Labor Day—Sept. 7  
Veterans Day—Nov. 11  
Thanksgiving Day—Nov. 27  
Christmas Eve, Day—Dec. 23-24  
New Year's Day—Dec. 31

### DROP OFF RECYCLE LOCATION!

Drop off your items to be recycled at the American Waste Transfer Station located at 280 Hughes Drive, Traverse City, off Hammond Road.