



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

WINTER 2023

# Garfield

## Charter Township

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

### TOWNSHIP HOURS

Monday—Thursday  
7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
CLOSED FRIDAYS

### HOLIDAY HOURS

Township offices will be closed  
for the observance of the  
following holidays:  
Christmas — Dec. 25th & 26th  
New Years — Jan. 1st & 2nd  
Martin Luther King Jr. — Jan. 15th  
Presidents' Day — Feb. 19th



### ELECTED OFFICIALS

CHUCK KORN.....SUPERVISOR  
CHLOE MACOMBER.....TREASURER  
LANIE MC MANUS.....CLERK  
MOLLY AGOSTINELLI.....TRUSTEE  
CHRIS BARSHEFF.....TRUSTEE  
STEVE DUELL.....TRUSTEE  
DENISE SCHMUCKAL.....TRUSTEE

### STAFF

JUSTIN BIGBEE.....APPRAISER  
AMY DEHAAN.....ASSESSOR  
RICH DERKS.....BUILDING INSPECTOR  
JAMIE DOUGLASS..BUILDING & LAND USE ASST.  
MICHAEL GREEN...ZONING ADMINISTRATOR  
STEVE HANNON..DEPUTY PLANNING DIRECTOR  
SEAN KEHOE.....PARK STEWARD AND  
CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER  
KAREN LEAVER.....ADMIN ASSISTANT  
DEREK MORTON.....PARK STEWARD AND  
CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER  
KATHLEEN ROON ....OFFICE COORDINATOR  
ABBY SIMON.....APPRAISER  
AMY SIMON.....DEPUTY TREASURER  
MIKE STEFFES.....GIS  
CARL STUDZINSKI.....BUILDING OFFICIAL  
JOHN SYCH.....PLANNING DIRECTOR  
BETTY TEZAK.....DEPUTY CLERK

### OUR MISSION

*As neighbors, we work together to create a community where our residents and businesses thrive, our natural resources are protected and enjoyed, our visitors are welcomed and appreciated, and our high quality of life is promoted.*

### FROM THE TOWN BOARD — MILLAGE TAX CUT

The Garfield Township Board of Trustees unanimously voted to lower the operating millage for the Township. The tax rate is being lowered from 2.0000 mills to 1.7500 mills, the lowest Garfield Township's millage has been in more than 20 years. This millage rate change will be seen on the 2023 winter tax bill.

The Township has seen significant increases in taxable values and tax revenue each year, due to the growth of this area. At the same time the Town Board has maintained very conservative spending and savings practices that have kept our expenses low. This has put the Township in the position to decrease our millage again for our residents. We want to thank our residents for their support of this Board and its elected officials in making this possible.

The chart to the right shows what this tax cut means to you as a property or business owner in savings per \$100,000 of taxable value of your property, per year.

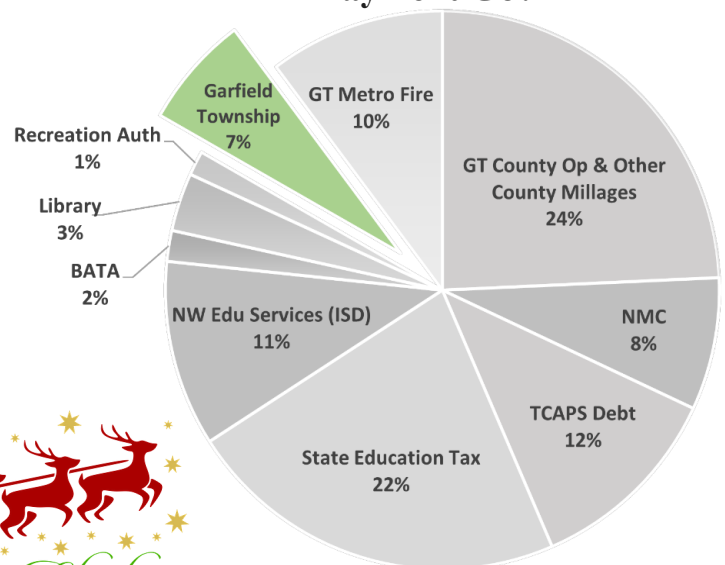
Taxable Value	Millage Rate	Tax Savings Per Year
\$ 100,000	2.0000	
\$ 100,000	1.7500	\$ 25.00

Please know that while Garfield Township is lowering its millage this may not mean savings overall on your entire tax bill. Garfield Township's operating millage is only a small portion (7%) of what is being paid when you pay your summer and winter taxes each year. While Garfield's millage is reducing, the taxable value of your property is still increasing each year per State Law and other Taxing Authorities may be raising their millages simultaneously.

Garfield Twp Yearly Millages

YEAR	MILLAGE RATE
2006	3.3584
2007	3.3584
2008	2.6744
2009	2.6744
2010	2.6744
2011-2014	2.3372
2015-2022	2.0000
2023	1.7500

Where Does Your Property Tax Bill Payment Go?



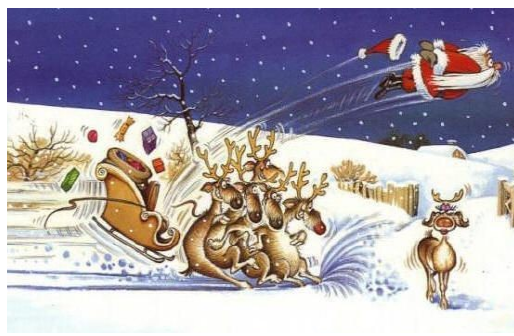
## FROM THE CLERK'S OFFICE

Voting in Michigan will be different in 2024 due to the passage of Proposal 22-2. Voting will be more accessible with extended days and times to vote. We will need additional Election Inspectors to cover these additional days during elections. There is an application on the Township website, or they are available in the Clerk's office.

The passage of Proposal 22-2 creates an early voting opportunity for all voters in Michigan. The Garfield Township early voting location will be at the Township Hall at 3848 Veterans Drive. All voters will be able to vote at the Township Hall for nine days prior to each of the 2024 elections; ending on the Sunday before each election.



Absentee voters will be receiving an application for ballots before the first election of 2024. There will be a box to check on that application that will provide for the voter to receive a ballot before each election going forward. There will be no further mailing of applications for ballots after the first election of 2024, unless requested by the voter. If the box is not checked on the application that you return to the Township, it will be the voter's responsibility to contact the Township for an application if they wish to receive an absentee ballot for future elections.



## FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

As the end of 2023 approaches, we are still seeing residential property values increasing – the big change from last year is the number of homes being constructed and the number of them on the market has declined. Combined with higher interest rates, we would normally expect to see the values begin to trend downward, but that hasn't happened – at least not yet. Commercial and Industrial real estate values have also risen albeit at a slower pace as well. Predictions by economists are mostly optimistic – with labor strikes and more interest rate hikes looming, who knows what will happen?

What I do know is that the lack of housing supply is going to keep house prices moving upward. This is simply because there is not enough inventory. Demand is far outpacing supply – after three (3) very good years of sales, the inventory has not been replaced on the market at the same pace as it has been disposed of – or purchased. And, builders who remember the Great Recession all too well are slow to create too much inventory simply because they do not want to be stuck with it should prices start declining.

2024 may be the year we start seeing decreases in home values, but maybe not ... No matter what happens, you can be sure that we are paying attention. We study sales of properties every year and pay special attention when things start changing. These studies are part of how we determine the values that are assigned to properties throughout the Township.

If you've recently purchased, or are contemplating purchasing, you may want to take a look at some of the informational brochures on our website, <https://www.garfield-twp.com/brochuresforms.asp>. You will learn more about how your property's value is determined, what will happen if you add a new deck or a pool, what to do if you disagree with the Assessed or Taxable value of your property, and more!

You can also find information about the sales that have occurred in your neighborhood at: [https://www.garfield-twp.com/sales\\_studies.asp](https://www.garfield-twp.com/sales_studies.asp). You will find sales maps as well as value studies for both homes (improved sales) and vacant land. If you don't find the answers you are looking for, you are always welcome to stop in, email or call us.

## **ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS: Small Business Taxpayer Exemption – 2024 update!**

If your business has **assets worth no more than \$180,000** (total true cash value, calculated using the normal Personal Property depreciation multipliers) as of 12/31/2023, be sure to watch your mail for details – you will find specific instructions for filing along with the required forms to file! This higher threshold may mean **NO PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES** for your business! If you filed back in February 2023, chances are you don't have to file again but don't assume that is the case – be sure to verify that we have your paperwork in order by giving us a call.

Until 2023, the asset limit was \$80,000 – an increase of \$100,000. This is great news for small business owners! Forms for 2024 will be mailed at the end of the year – be sure to watch your mail and be sure to get the appropriate form(s) back to us no later than February 20th. As always, if you need help or have questions, please stop in, call us at (231) 941-1620 or email us.

## FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

### Complete draft of updated Master Plan available for review

Throughout 2023, Planning Department staff and the Planning Commission have reviewed several topics for inclusion in the updated Township Master Plan. These have included an Existing Conditions Report of background information and data about the Township; a Community Engagement Report summarizing the 2022 random-sample Community Survey and other public feedback; draft Future Land Use, Goals, and Objectives; and Implementation.

A complete draft of the updated Master Plan is now available for review on the Township website at the link available below. The Planning Commission and Township Board will be reviewing this draft in early 2024 before finalizing a draft for official public review.

To follow the Master Plan update and provide input on the draft Master Plan, please go to:

<http://www.garfield-twp.com/masterplan.asp>

The Master Plan process articulates the community's vision for what Garfield Township will look like in the future and helps to guide land use, zoning, and other policies. Your input in this process can help shape what your community will look like in the future.

Anyone is also welcome to contact the Planning Department with their questions or comments regarding the Master Plan process. We look forward to hearing from you!



## FROM THE PARKS DEPARTMENT

Many thanks to 4Front and its staff for the volunteer work cleaning up the Commons Natural Area on Indigenous Day. 4Front Staff assisted in covering up graffiti, picking up trash and hand pruning the trails. Nice job!

Also, a big thank you to the TART & the Buffalo Ridge Trail Volunteer Group for their hard work removing the invasive autumn olive near the Buffalo Ridge Trail. Many hands make light work.



Buffalo Ridge Trail  
Invasive Species Work

Recently, we have been receiving calls from volunteers wishing to donate their time cleaning up and improving our parks. You can reach our Park Staff at [parks@garfield-twp.com](mailto:parks@garfield-twp.com), call 231.225.3158 for Derek or 231.225.3170 for Sean.

Our newly established east side park, River East Recreation Area, is taking shape. Dog parks have been installed and the turf is established for Spring 2024 use. Restrooms, playground equipment and walking trail installations are the focus for 2024.

Commons Clean-up with 4Front Staff



Buffalo Ridge Trail  
Invasive Species Work

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**Brain Teasers**



## FROM THE ZONING DEPARTMENT

With winter approaching, we want to make you aware of our Noise Ordinance as it relates to snow removal. According to the Noise Ordinance, the operation of commercial snow removal equipment (other than light trucks) and the use of back-up alarms between the hours of 10:00 pm and 6:00 am are prohibited except when the Grand Traverse County Emergency Management declares a snow emergency. This office often receives complaints from residents who are awakened early in the morning to noise from snow removal equipment.

If you are a resident or business and are hiring snow removal contractors, we would suggest that you let them know of these rules in advance of the upcoming winter season to avoid future conflicts.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Zoning Department at (231) 941-1620 x 230.



### HOLIDAY RECIPE - CANDY SNACK MIX



- 1 package (24 ounces) roasted peanuts
  - 1 package (19.6 ounces) Golden Grahams cereal
  - 1 package (15 ounces) raisins
  - 1/2 cup butter, cubed
  - 12 ounces white candy coating, coarsely chopped
  - 2 cups creamy peanut butter
  - 1 package (2 pounds) confectioners' sugar
  - 2-1/2 cups red and green milk chocolate M&M's
1. In a large bowl, combine the peanuts, cereal and raisins. In a microwave, melt the butter, candy coating and peanut butter; stir until smooth. Pour over cereal mixture and toss to coat.
  2. Working in batches, place confectioners' sugar in a large bag; add coated mixture. Close bag and shake to coat. Spread onto baking sheets; sprinkle with M&M's. When cool, store in airtight containers. Substitute one of your favorite ingredients instead!

## FROM THE SUPERVISOR

Recently the Township raised water rates significantly. Basic service was increased from \$11.50 to \$17.00 for 462 cubic feet or 3,456 gallons.

That decision was guided by a much-needed rate study from a consultant hired by the Grand Traverse County DPW to provide each township with financial projections based on the previous rates.

Our water and sewer systems are "Enterprise Funds" and are completely funded by the users and developers. It would be unfair for taxpayers who are well & septic users to pay for something they don't even use.

We contracted for the study because a series of things caused big increases in the system's expenses. The Flint Water Crises was the first, it caused the state and federal regulators to increase the work required by water systems. Next the City water plant began catching up on deferred maintenance. Since we buy water from the city on a cost-plus basis, our budget was hit.

East Bay Township was the first to be studied. Then, Covid hit - shutting down many operations and delaying study results. Federal spending, inflation and supply chain issues dramatically increased the price of pipe and mechanical components and affected our bottom line.

Just to put things in perspective, here are the current rates of our neighboring municipalities:

**Acme Sewer** - \$35.00/month  
**East Bay Sewer** - \$26.42/month  
**East Bay Water** - \$23.36/month 600 cu. ft.,  
 \$2.65/hundred over minimum  
**Elmwood Greilickville Sewer** - \$23.00/month  
**Elmwood Greilickville Water** - \$28.99/month  
 600 cu. ft., \$3.55/hundred over minimum  
**Elmwood Timberlee Water** - \$31.00/month 468  
 cu. ft., \$1.75/hundred over minimum  
**Garfield Water** - \$17.00/month 462cu. ft., \$2.70  
 per 100 cu.ft.  
**Garfield Sewer** - \$20.90/month

**Peninsula Sewer** - \$29.78/month  
**Peninsula Water** - \$45.34/month 600 cu. ft.,  
 \$4.00/hundred over minimum  
**Whitewater Sewer** - \$25.00/month  
**Traverse City Sewer** - \$47.00/month,  
 \$53.00/1,000 cu ft over minimum  
**Traverse City Water** - \$16.00/month,  
 \$20.00/1,000 cu ft over Minimum  
 (Traverse City Customers who live outside the  
 city pay 150% of the city residents rates)

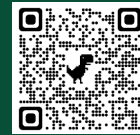
It has always been our wish to keep rates as reasonable as possible, and that is still the case. Please feel free to send us a letter, email or call if you have any other questions.

Sincerely,

Chuck Korn, Supervisor  
 Garfield Charter Township

## SPRING BRUSH DROP OFF PASSES

Spring brush drop off passes will be available at the front desk by April. Look to [recyclesmart.info](http://recyclesmart.info) for further



information or scan the QR Code for days, times, location, etc.

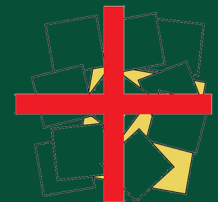
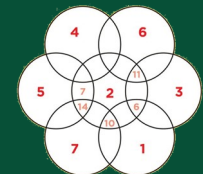
### Hazardous Waste Dates:

Thursday, April 11th  
 Thursday, May 16th  
 Thursday, June 20th  
 Thursday, August 8th  
 Saturday, September 14th

You can also find recycling and hazardous waste information at:

[www.recyclesmart.info](http://www.recyclesmart.info)  
 or call 231-941-5555.

## ANSWERS TO SUMMER BRAIN TEASERS.



The Township Board meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm.

The Planning Commission meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm.

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on an as needed basis on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm.

The Parks and Recreation Commission meets the 1st Monday of every other month at 6:00 pm.

All meetings take place at the Garfield Township Hall unless stated otherwise on the agenda.