



TOWNSHIP TATTLER

Volume 3, number 2

Fall 2013

Sherman Township Board of Trustees:

- Supervisor:
Rob Middlemis-Brown
- Township Clerk:
Addy Schmidt
- Township Treasurer:
Marilyn Kastelic
- Trustee:
Bob Strykowski
- Trustee:
Deneen Connell

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Above the Fold: Whoa! Is this Gay?

If it has been a while since you drove through Gay, the next time through, you may wonder if you took a wrong turn. Downtown Gay Location, looks a bit different after a busy summer of restoration and construction.

Let's start with a chronology of projects from this summer.

School House Park The Recreation Board



coordinated the design and contracting for construction of a park at the corner of Second Street and Lake Street. The park and pavilion became the focus of much interest, once completed. Because of donations of materials and volunteer services, the pavilion has become a grander structure than originally imagined.

The design incorporated substantial beams, a hardwood ceiling, and graceful gable-ends. The donated 12" X 12" supporting timbers became the raw material for extraordinary carved images. Individuals and families paid for the carvings to memorialize a loved one or to show their community support.

Visitors used the park during the July 4th celebration, MusicFest, and throughout the summer.

"Every time I'm in town, I see people stop to admire the pavilion. Sometimes one



car after another stops. Large groups of bicyclists stop for bathroom and water breaks. It's amazing the attention that the park receives," said the township supervisor, Rob Middlemis-Brown.

"We started with nine carvings, but as soon as people saw the first ones done, everyone wanted to be a part of it. The artist, Rich Pethtel, did a wonderful job and could create anything that people wanted," according to Lorna Rown of the Recreation Board.

The park will close at the end of October and reopen, weather permitting, in May. That does not stop visitors from appreciating the artwork on the beams.

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Straight from the Board:

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that the financial audit for the year ending March, 2013, indicated that the books are in order. One problem has been identified in the last several audits: the separation of financial

duties. Because the township has only one clerk and one treasurer, there is no way to separate financial activities and financial oversight. There are simply not enough people to create an internal control.

Additionally, the township has no one available to complete financial statements required by the state. Currently, the auditor performs that function. Most townships have personnel to com-

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Fireside Chat: Chimney Sweeps

The last months have been quiet with only a single call-out for an accident on Potato Patch Road. The vehicle involved in the accident left before assistance arrived.

Volunteer firefighters engaged in routine training during monthly meetings

throughout the summer. Monthly meetings are scheduled for the second Friday each month at 6:30 PM. The fire chief asks all volunteers and prospective volunteers to attend. **We can always use more volunteers.**

With fall here, it is time to make sure that your chim-

ney and flu are clean and that your furnace is in good working order. October is fire-safety month and a good time to change batteries in both your fire detector and your carbon-monoxide detector.

New Assessor — Mark Erhart

Hired May 1, 2013, Mark Erhart has taken over duties as the township assessor. He has begun a reassessment of properties with the goal to reassess properties once every three years.

“I keep a rolling update of the database, complete with photos, sketches, and data for each parcel. I usually start with the township officers, just so that residents know that everyone is treated fairly.” Erhart said, while doing the site visit at the township supervisor’s home.

Erhart also is the assessor for Grant, Bessemer, and Watersmeet townships. He is a certified Michigan SAB Level II Assessor, Michigan Certified Assessing Officer with over seven years of experience. He is working toward a Level III certification.

Erhart found that the Principal Residence

Exemption (PRE) information for the township did not comply with state standards. He requests that all qualifying residents file their PRE forms to receive exemption from local school tax. Forms were sent to residents currently with PRE. Additional forms are available online at http://www.michigan.gov/taxes/0%2C1607%2C7-238-43535_43537-154841--%2C00.html, or from the Township Office. The completed documentation should be sent directly to the assessor:

Mark Erhart
P.O. Box 13
Watersmeet, MI
49969



Game Night? Potlucks? Use the Community Hall

Have you ever thought that it might be nice to get together with your neighbors for a pleasant evening? The Community Hall once housed a bowling alley, performances, and other recreation opportunities. Now the building serves primarily as the venue for the Auxiliary Sale and Bazaar. The beautifully renovated building is heated and maintained year-round, but sits idle much of the time.

A few interested citizens would like to use the building for periodic get-togethers during the winter months. Volunteers have offered to organize periodic activities. The

first is a game night on Friday, October 25, 7:00 - 9:00 PM.

“Bring your favorite game, and snacks and drinks to share. I’ll probably bring a couple of cribbage boards and playing cards. Board games are welcome as well.” said Sherry Middlemis-Brown, organizer of the first game night.

If you would like to organize an activity for the Community Hall, please give Sherry a call at 296-8097. Organizers will be responsible for set up and clean up for their event.



Catch the next issue of the Township Tattler and a feature article on the Auxiliary.

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plete this task, making them compliant with state law.

Water Plant

Since last spring, the water plant has presented a few problems for the township. First, the pumps began pumping at levels three times their normal rate. The water plant supervisor, Bob Strykowski, started looking for water leaks. He checked the distribution system, and finding no problems, continued by checking for evidence of leaks from uninhabited houses.

Although he found no leaks, he encountered several failing curb-stop valves that required replacing.

When the new water system was installed, the installer did not replace all of the old connections and valves with new ones.

The old valves have started to fail, requiring that they be dug up and replaced by a contractor.

After significant time and effort expended to find the leak, Strykowski found that flow meters for the distribution system and those for the pumps were not in agreement. Although the meter indicated that 12-14,000 gallons were distributed each day, the well meters indicated that only 6-8,000 gallons were pumped each day. An electrician fixed the problem with the meters so they now agree.

This summer, Well 2 began to sound as if it had

air in the line. A contractor examined the problem and determined that the valve needed to be closed from 14 gallons per minute to 11 gallons to keep adequate water levels in the well.

This, in turn, caused the chlorine pump that is activated by water flow to cease injecting chlorine for Well 2. After being unable to work around this problem adequately, the well contractor recommended installing a different injection switch that works electronically instead of using water flow as the trigger.

In the last month, higher than normal distribution rates once again created a

concern that the system had a leak. Finally, a resident called Strykowski to say that his water flow had decreased over a

few days time. The homeowner found his crawl-space flooded. Strykowski determined that the problem was not in the distribution line, but rather in the supply line to the house. Strykowski shut off the water and the homeowners had their line fixed.

Although all of these problems have been costly, they have not affected the quality of water distributed to Gay Location. In fact, the recent annual water quality testing determined that all constituents are within standards with most contaminant levels below detection. Because of consistently low

contaminant levels, this expensive suite of tests, which was required annually, will be run only once in three years from now on. Monthly levels of fecal coliform are below thresholds as well.

Sewer System

In April, the sewage levels in the holding tanks became dangerously high, threatening to damage the drain field. Alarms blared and Nathan Martin, the system technician, had to hand activate pumps around the clock for several days, until a contractor could pump the system and reduce sewage levels. Although this alleviated the immediate problem, it did not address the reason for the failure.

The engineering firm that designed the treatment system visited the site to help determine the problem. They could not make a determination as to cause of the system failure, and recommended that a licensed wastewater treatment professional be contracted to oversee the overall operation of the sewage treatment plant.

With the sewage treatment facility being 10-years-old, problems not associated with a new system will continue to occur. Therefore, the Board of Trustees decided to hire Dirt Works, as the waste water facility operator. Martin will continue as the technician with daily checks and logging of data, required by the state.



“Sherman Township — a great place to live.”





Sherman Township -- a great place to live.

Nestled on the east shore of the Keweenaw Peninsula, Sherman Township provides a lovely spot for a permanent or a vacation home. The area has one of the lowest populations in the state, but the township offers the amenities associated with a community. The Gay smokestack, seen for miles, is a navigational aid. The Gay Schoolhouse reminds us of an important heritage. The Community Hall provides handicap accessible meeting space and houses the Auxiliary's Sale and Bazaar. Visit the memorabilia on the stage of the Community Hall to learn more about our community's history. The Township Office houses the Sherman Township government offices.

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Community Hall & Fire Hall

Funding from the Auxiliary and township allowed the Community Hall to receive new vinyl siding that



matches the Township Office color, and allowed replacement of soffit and fascia on the Fire Hall. The Auxiliary and township shared the cost of the projects. The contractor also removed the listing brick chimney and Jay Piquette filled a hole in the basement masonry.



Signage
New signs popped up all over Gay. The new park has a sign

explaining its origin and use. The Township Office has a new sign at the door, as does the Community Hall.

Additionally, a new bulletin board now resides at the pull-over in front of the Township Office. Motorists can pull off the road and see everything posted without leaving their car. Finally, on meeting day for the township Board of Trustees, a temporary sign outside the office announces "Public Meeting Today."

Doors

The utility door on the Fire Hall had been a recycled trailer door; inadequate and insecure for its current use. It had caused problems opening and shutting properly, so the contractor, who sided the Community Hall, examined the door and recommended some changes. He installed a new secure door and awning that work as they should.

This summer, the front door to the Township Office became misaligned and would not lock. Inspection

revealed the wooden door and frame had rotted. The township installed a new steel door and key-alike locks for both exterior doors. Trustees decided not to cut a bill slot into the insulated front door, but installed a secure drop box beside the door.

No more pond!

Poor drainage in front of the buildings had resulted in a pool forming in front of the buildings after every significant rain. In winter, this area became a skating rink, making access to the buildings dangerous.

To reduce the hazard in front of the buildings and to facilitate snow removal, the Board of Trustees decided to grade and pave the graveled area between the road and front entrances, and the Auxiliary provided financial assistance for the project. The paving contractor improved drainage, diverting the water from the road away from the buildings, and then paved the stamp-sand area with asphalt.

We are on the web at
<http://keweenawcountyonline.org/township-sherman.php>

Township Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM (unless otherwise noted), Township Office. Agendas are posted on the bulletin board in front of the Township Office.

Newsletter editor:
Sherry Middlemis-Brown,
Sherman Township resident

**Sherman Township,
located in**



Township Event Calendar

Board of Trustees Meetings

Regular township meetings are the second Thursday of each month, 6:30 PM, at the Township Office, unless otherwise posted. Agendas are on the township bulletin board in front of the Township Office for these open public meetings.

VFD Meetings

The VFD meets at the Fire Hall every second Friday of the month at 6:30 PM. Prospective volunteers are welcome.

Board of Review (Assessments)

The Board of Review will accept new inquiries and petitions concerning property assessments, during the annual review March 10 and 11, 2014. Tuesday hours run 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and Wednesday hours run 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Inquiries and petitions may be submitted by email or letter prior to the sessions, or petitioners may come directly to the open sessions at the Township Offices. The Board of Review will meet to confer on old business on December 10, 2013.