



TOWNSHIP TATTLER

Volume 6, Number 1

Fall 2016-Winter 2017

Sherman Township Board of Trustees:

Rob Middlemis-Brown, Supervisor

Addy Schmidt, Clerk

Marilyn Kastelic, Treasurer

Chuck Bennetst, Trustee

Deneen Connell, Trustee

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

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Above the fold: Meet the Board

In the November election, voters returned all of the trustees from the prior session to the Board. You may like to know a little about them.

Rob Middlemis-Brown

Rob filled an interim position as Supervisor in 2011. He also serves on the volunteer fire department.

Addy Schmidt

Addy agreed to fill the term as interim township clerk in 2001 and has continued in that position ever since. She

joined the VFD in 2002 and also services as a certified food handler and general staff of the Fire Department Auxiliary.

Marilyn Kastelic

Marilyn was a bank service manager, which made her an attractive candidate for township treasurer in 2004. She has continued as treasurer ever since. She also serves as treasurer for the Fire Department Auxiliary.

Chuck Bennetts

Chuck filled an interim position on the board in

December 2014, when an elected trustee became the fire chief. Chuck had moved into Gay several years earlier and became involved in the community immediately. Voters elected him to the trustee position in November 2016.

Deneen Connell

Deneen became a trustee in 2008 and has served continuously since then. She also serves as a member of the Auxiliary.

Please feel free to contact your trustees with concerns, ideas, or offers to volunteer.

Auxiliary News

Summer of 2016 saw another banner year for the Fire Department Auxiliary.

The Auxiliary exists to support both the Sherman Township Volunteer Fire Department and community projects, such as restoration and preservation of the Community Hall and memorabilia associated with Historical Gay. Auxiliary workers raise funds through a bi-weekly Bazaar and Sale, during the summer. Auxiliary members also help with other events in the community, such as the Firefighter's Pancake Breakfast (reportedly the best pancake breakfast fundraiser in the area!) and Keweenaw County Historical Society events.

The Bazaar and Sale earned a total of \$11,942.86 this year. Of course, overhead

costs will be taken from that total, such as \$300 paid to the township for water and sewer use, but our earnings allowed us to provide \$1400 to the fire department for tools they needed to put their extrication equipment into service. We also paid the \$5000 loan from the township to the fire department for the 2015 purchase of a tanker truck. The Auxiliary contributed \$1000 to the Community Hall Fund for future maintenance and improvements.

The Auxiliary enjoyed using the upgraded basement area during the sales this year. The firefighters painted the walls and floor with a sealant-type paint, and more than doubled the lighting. This made the are very inviting.

The township extends a big thank you to everyone,

who works tirelessly to make the sales such a success. That includes a thank you to the many people, who donate generously to the sales, providing lovely, functional items for the sale. Also, we thank the many customers from far and wide, who faithfully patronize the sale.

Please, come join us May 15, 2017, when we open the Community Hall and start setting up for our sales. We welcome contributions of hand crafted items for our Silent Auction. Like us on Facebook ([Sherman Township VFD Auxiliary](#)), where we post updates from May through September. Our schedule is posted in this newsletter.

Fire Department Plans for the Future



Sherman Township has a high rate of volunteerism. Are you one of the volunteers?



Gay Schoolhouse — this icon of the community has undergone many changes and is now open for tours from May through October on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. See the Keweenaw County Historical Society (<http://www.keweenawhistory.org/sites/gayschool.html>) for more information.

Voters approved the Sherman Township Fire Department millage proposal in November 2016. The proposal specifically stated that money from the 2.0 mills would fund “purchase and maintenance of fire-suppression equipment and apparatus.” We expect approximately \$11,400 per year from 2016 to 2021, when the millage expires.

Department members drafted a proposed 12-year financial plan for 2016 to 2028 for purchase and maintenance of fire-suppression equipment and apparatus after the millage passed. We projected the plan beyond expiration of the millage, because we need to plan for obsolescence of our pumper, which we legally must replace by 2028.

The Board of Trustees (Board) approved the proposed financial plan in December. The Board will administer millage funds, including approving changes to the financial plan. The annual audit, completed by the township’s accountant and reviewed by the Michigan Department of Treasury, will scrutinize the appropriate use of and procedures associated with this funding.

The 2016-2028 financial plan stipulates annual money placed into savings to-

wards future replacement of the two fire-suppression vehicles and for estimated cost of equipment maintenance or replacement. Over 80% of funding will be set-aside annually for vehicles that meet minimum requirements of NFPA (National Fire Protection Service) 1901 Standard For Automotive Fire Apparatus. That breaks down to \$3,500 per year for replacement of the 30-year-old tanker, which NFPA requires by 2025, and \$6,000 annually for replacement of the 23-year old pumper, as required by 2028.

We estimate annual operating expenses of \$1,900, mainly for regular maintenance and replacement of equipment. That amount breaks down to (1) vehicle maintenance (\$750), (2) equipment maintenance (\$400), (3) personal protective equipment replacement (\$350), and (4) matching funds for occasional grants (a minimum of \$400). We hope that we will accumulate excess operational funds over time so that we can apply for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) matching grants and meet demands for occasional emergency equipment replacement.

A subsequent renewal of the fire services millage for six additional years will need approval by voters in

2022 to satisfy the financial plan.

The millage will sustain the fire department by funding **minimum** NFPA requirements. Additional income through fundraising and grants will provide equipment needed for a fully functional emergency response unit, including wildland-fire suppression for our rural setting. The fire department will continue holding fundraisers each year that augment contributions from the Fire Department Auxiliary.

Our priority is (1) replacement of required structural fire suppression equipment followed by (2) replacement of wildland-fire suppression equipment. Currently for wildland fire, we use a 1985 brush truck, which has several mechanical problems and needs replacement. After being on a Michigan Department of Natural Resources waiting list for several years, the department still hopes for a surplus brush truck as a replacement.

The department currently has ten active members. Two members hope to become first responders, which would transform the department from a fire to a “fire and rescue” unit. Please consider serving your community by joining the department and becoming a local hero!

Proposed Auxiliary Schedule:

Monday, May 15, 10 AM—open Community Hall and begin accepting donations. Set up continues each Monday at 10 AM throughout the summer.

Monday, June 5, 6 PM—Spring Meeting, all welcome! Monday evening donations begin Monday, June 5, 6—8 PM.

Sale dates:

June 17	July 29
July 4, Tuesday	August 12
July 15	August 26
July 29	September 2

Sewer Drain Field Problems Addressed

Gay's sewer system received a little TLC in the form of several overdue repairs this past summer. The Water and Sewer Advisory Committee (Committee) advised the Board of Trustees on repair alternatives.

First, completed in May, an electrician replaced and repaired float switches that control wastewater pumped into the drain field. Failed switches caused a backup of liquid, as the pumps did not cycle correctly among the sections of the drain field.

Second, the Committee asked experts how to reduce ongoing problem with nuisance odors. Although odors come with wastewater treatment, the Committee learned of a measure to try that

should reduce the smell. Nuisance odors came from the exhaust from a blower unit that aerates the digestion tank. In early June, we installed a blower stack. A 20-foot vertical blower stack now allows odor to drift above the trees and out of the neighborhood.

Thirdly, a local contractor flushed the drain field tiles in late June. Pumps push treated wastewater through one-inch diameter tiles, each with a series of small holes that release the wastewater into the drain field substrate. However, our tile system has malfunctioned for several years, because solids had entered tile and clogged many holes. By flushing tiles, we removed solids and cleaned

debris affecting flow. The contractor recommended flushing each year to maintain optimum flow into the field. The Committee added annual flushing to a routine maintenance schedule.

The final fix happened in October with installation of drain tile around a blower unit shelter and underground tank. Both the shelter and tank have flooded after rains and snowmelt. These drain tiles route excess water away from a sensitive motor and electrical components.

We owe a big thank you to the wastewater treatment operator, Bob Pieti. He has done an excellent job in maintaining the system, cleaning the filters on a reg-

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Not in My Septic System!



**“Sherman
Township —
a great place
to live.**

Water supply deficiency to be improved

People do not want to worry about reliable water supply; most want clean water that just flows out of the tap. We all know that potable water comes from somewhere, but then someone must store, pressurize, and treat it to ensure a continuous supply of clean water to our homes.

Although Gay's water supply system is only about 10-years-old, our wells produce half of what they did when first installed. Over time a well bore, or hole, clogs with small particles from the bedrock. This sediment impedes flow from cracks and fractures in bedrock that supply groundwater to the well. Then, well pumps must work twice as long to produce the needed water. Increased stress on the pumps leads to costly pump failures.

The Michigan Department

of Environmental Quality monitored the decrease in our water supply over several years. They issued a letter in early 2016, stating that the water supply reduction reached a critical level and we must take action.

The Water and Sewer Advisory Committee has been discussing with experts the various options to resolve this problem, and presented those options to the Board of Trustees. The best recommendation, made by Kleiman Pump & Well Drilling, Inc., Iron Mountain, Michigan and approved by UP Engineering and Architects, Houghton, would **“redevelop the wells”**.

The redevelopment process cleans the well bore using high-pressure water to remove sediment and an acid to remove calcium build-up. The process cleans the well bore and bed-

rock cracks or fractures where water enters the well, thus increasing water flow into the well. Kleiman Pump & Well Drilling estimated that redevelopment would take three days for each well with several days scheduled between the two wells to allow sediment to settle before switching wells.

During the process, both wells will shut down, isolating the effects of redevelopment to the area immediately surrounding each well. We hope to complete the procedure in December 2016, when water demand is at its lowest. The expected daily water use of 3,500 gallons over each of the three-day shutdowns will

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Sherman Township
8872 Second Street
Lake Linden, MI 49945

Phone: 906-296-1211
Fax: 906-296-1211
E-mail:
shermantwp@pasty.net

Meetings: 2nd Thursday of
each month at 6:30 PM,
Township Hall.

We are on the web at
[http://
keweenawcountyonline
.org/township-
sherman.php](http://keweenawcountyonline.org/township-sherman.php)



A township of



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 by land and water. The School House Park offers a lovely gathering and picnicking spot. 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.

(Sewer, Continued from page 3)
ular basis, and faithfully making sure the system operates effectively.

We have notified all system users about what items they can safely flush into the system and about the ongoing issue with sump pumps emptying into the sewer system. The wastewater treatment facility is basically an elaborate version of a septic system., and so, subject to all of the

fragilities of a septic system.

People tend to feel that occasionally flushing a non-biodegradable item or having their sump pump drain to the sewer will not make a difference. What is one infraction in the scheme of things?

The fact is that any unacceptable items entering into our little system can cause substantial damage. The cumulative effects of *several households* flushing

non-degradable items or adding sump water can prove disastrous. It only takes one sump pump running frequently to flood out our small drain field. Any damage caused to the system will affect all users in higher fees to pay for repairs. Please, take care of our wastewater system so it works long into the future for everyone!

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come from the system's 40,000-gallon storage tank. We estimate completion of both well regenerations by the end of February 2017 with an estimated cost of \$17,200.

Experts explained that well redevelopment is part of maintenance of any municipal system. Water users will pay for this maintenance through the Repair and Replacement account, established when we installed the system for these sorts of situations. We replenish the Repair and Replacement account by transferring a set amount of money quar-

terly from the operations account, funded by user fees, to the Repair and Replacement account. The Rural Development loan that funded the water supply system requires this Repair and Replacement account process to ensure that money is available for ongoing maintenance. We had an account balance of approximately \$21,350 in November 2016. Just as with any supply or service, we must allow for repair and replacement as part of "the cost of doing business."

The township deeply appreciates the efforts of the

water supply system operator, Bob Strykowski, as he continues to deal with this and many other issues. All public water supply systems in Michigan must meet the same set of regulations regardless of the community size. Bob has done an outstanding job of ensuring the water users in Gay get safe and reliable drinking water at a very reasonable cost.