

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP



Meetings

All meetings are held at the Gaines Charter Township office located at 8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Caledonia, MI 49316.

The Township Board of Trustees meets the 2nd Monday of every month at 7:00 PM.

The Planning Commission meets the 4th Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM.

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM (as needed).

Board, Commission and Committee meetings are posted on our website calendar (www.gainestownship.org) and on the bulletin board just inside the main entrance to the Township Hall.

Meeting agendas and minutes are available on the website.

Township Government is Citizen Government

In townships, citizens contribute their talents, skills, and ideas to preserve the quality of life and to deliver important programs and services. Township officials live in the communities they serve and stay in touch with ever changing needs. Township officials are creative in delivering quality services with the least possible burden to taxpayers. The law limits the amount of taxes that can be levied, and changes in tax obligations must be voted on by township residents.

The township works to ensure that the community's health and safety needs are adequately addressed. Police, fire, and emergency medical services can be managed directly by the township or handled in cooperation with other governmental or private organizations. The township also works to responsibly handle land use decisions for the community while balancing these choices with individual property rights. The impact on the community resulting from land use decisions is very important to township officials. Leisure and recreational activities can also be provided by the township to make the area a more pleasant place to live.

Townships do not have direct responsibility for roads and drains, but they cooperate with county agencies that have direct responsibility for these services. The same is true for the township's relationship with local court systems.

The History of Townships

Michigan's local government structure can be a bit bewildering. Michigan's 1,242 townships govern the vast majority of Michigan's land area and serve over forty-five percent of Michigan's residents. Townships were the brainchild of Thomas Jefferson and were created before Michigan became a state. Andrew Jackson's philosophy of direct democracy further shaped the Township Government that serves and thrives today.

Michigan has both General Law Townships and Charter Townships. Both are local units of government, but Charter Townships have additional authority from the State in order to govern in an efficient and effective manner. As of 2023, 146 Townships in Michigan are designated as Charter Townships.

Gaines Charter Township

Elected Officials

2025 - 2028

Supervisor

Robert Terpstra

bob.terpstra@gainestownship.org

Clerk

Michael A. Brew

michael.brew@gainestownship.org

Treasurer

Laurie Lemke

laurie.lemke@gainestownship.org

Trustees

Robert DeWard

robert.deward@gainestownship.org

Dan Fryling

dan.fryling@gainestownship.org

Tim Haagsma

tim.haagsma@gainestownship.org

Kathy Vander Stel

kathy.vanderstel@gainestownship.org

Manager

Rod Weersing

rod.weersing@gainestownship.org

How Townships are Governed

The Township Board consists of a Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer and, depending on the township's population, two or four trustees. Each of these officials have specific duties that contribute to effective township governance.

The elected members of the Township Board adopt an annual budget that determines the scope and character of township services. They also adopt ordinances to protect the community's health, safety, and welfare. The Township Board oversees township programs and services.

Elected Township Board members also oversee administration of important township functions. For example, the Township Supervisor, besides moderating meetings, also ensures that assessments on taxable property conform to state laws; and the Township Clerk has custody of vital records, accounts for Township finances, and oversees elections conducted by the township. The Township Treasurer collects taxes for the township, schools, county, and other levying entities. Trustees also perform other duties as directed by the Township Board.

How You Can Get Involved

Gaines Township government welcomes citizen involvement! Many township programs and services rely on volunteers. Citizens serve on appointed boards, commissions, and committees that decide important public issues. Some townships hold annual meetings where electors directly participate in decisions allowed by law.

Democracy is Government by the people. While Township Boards are lawfully responsible for township governance, the Township Board needs to hear the perspective and views of residents. Keeping abreast of township issues and providing your viewpoint on issues is essential to the township's success.

If you are a resident of Gaines Charter Township, at least 18, and would like to serve on a board or committee, go to the Gaines Charter Township web page (www.gainestownship.org) under How Do I, Volunteer, click on "Serve on a Board or Committee" and complete the application and return it to the Township Hall.



**GAINES
CHARTER
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Gain More.

Gaines Charter Township honors our heritage, creates a hospitable, responsible, and engaging environment for residents, business owners, and community partners to ensure a vibrant future for generations.

Gaines Charter Township Website

www.gainestownship.org

Available Online Services:

- Pay Your Tax Bill
- Pay your Water/Sewer Bill
- Pay Building Permit Fees
- Apply for Building Department Permits

Gaines Charter Township provides a link to BS&A software so that you can look up information pertaining to real property, special assessments, tax payments (current and history), water, and sewer accounts, and building permits.