



GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP

TOWNSHIP NEWS & INFORMATION

8555 KALAMAZOO AVE., SE, CALEDONIA, MI 49316
616-698-6640 ~ WWW.GAINESTOWNSHIP.ORG



Office Hours:

Monday thru Friday
8:30 am to 5:00 pm
8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE
Caledonia, MI 49316
616-698-6640
www.gainestownship.org

Rob DeWard, Supervisor

Michael Brew, Clerk

Laurie Lemke, Treasurer

Dan Fryling, Trustee

Tim Haagsma, Trustee

Bob Terpstra, Trustee

Kathy VanderStel, Trustee

Rod Weersing, Township Manager

FROM THE DESK OF...Rod Weersing, Township Manager

The Cutlerville Fire Department was established in 1950 through an Intergovernmental Agreement between Gaines Charter Township and Byron Township. In July of last year, Byron Township notified the Gaines Charter Township Board of Trustees of their intent to cancel that agreement. As the remaining Township, Gaines had the option of continuing to operate from the current Cutlerville Fire Station, located at 11 68th Street SW, or building a new station within Gaines Charter Township. The Township Board determined that the best course of action, for the time being, was to buy out the equity of Byron Township in the current station and four of the five emergency vehicles. So, Gaines will continue to operate from that station while searching for a location and beginning the discussion of design options for a new fire station within the Township.

With the breakup of the Cutlerville Fire Department, Gaines Charter Township will join the Cutlerville Fire Department with the Dutton Fire Department to form the Gaines Charter Township Fire Department. The new Department will operate from two stations, the Cutlerville Fire Station, and the Dutton fire Station. This combined department will continue to improve the services offered to the residents and businesses of our Township. If you should have any questions about the breakup of the Cutlerville Fire Department, or the future of first responder, medical and fire related services in the Township, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Township office (616-698-6640).



FREE FAMILY EVENTS...

GAINES CHARTERTOWNSHIP

— PRESENTS —

MOVIES IN THE PARK

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23RD

FREE FAMILY EVENT
FRIDAY, AUGUST 23RD
TOWNSHIP HALL
84TH & KALAMAZOO

FOOD TRUCKS ~ KIDS
GAMES ~ ACTIVITIES FOR
THE ENTIRE FAMILY
6:30PM

SPONSORED BY THE GAINES CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND GAINES BRANCH KDL LIBRARY

8:30 PM SHOWTIME



The 41st Annual National Night Out will be held on Tuesday, August 6th at South Christian High School.

This free event starts at 4:30PM and runs to 7:00 PM, and will feature pizza, hot dogs, games, and inflatables for kids. Enjoy visiting the K-9's, drones, TAC vehicle, Mounted Unit, and patrol vehicles. There will be a large fire apparatus display, and local businesses playing games! Come check it out and meet some of your local public safety officers.



ASSESSING DEPARTMENT...Mike Visbara, Assistant Assessor

How is the Value of Property Figured?

Michigan has an *Ad Valorem* tax system. This means property tax is based, in part, on the overall value of a property. Assessors are charged with determining the value of all parcels in the Township each year. To accomplish this, we use mass appraisal. We analyze data in large quantities, develop statistics from the data, and apply the findings to large, similar groups of properties like neighborhoods.

New Construction

There has been a lot of new construction in Gaines Township, and there is more coming! If you are building or buying a new home, what can you expect from your assessment? The Township values property for the tax year based on the building's progress on December 31st (Tax Day). That is to say: the 2025 building value will be set based on the state of the property on December 31, 2024. So, if new construction is deemed 50% complete at the end of the calendar year, for 2025 the tax will be figured on 50% of the building's value. If the home is completed in the subsequent year, the remaining 50% of value will be placed on the 2026 tax year assessment as the home was 100% complete on December 31, 2025.

Inflation Rate Multiplier

Even if there were no changes to a property, either via transfer of ownership (uncapping taxable value) or physical alterations affecting value, the amount paid in tax is subject to change year-to-year. Since Proposal A was passed into Michigan law in 1994, the State calculates an Inflation Rate Multiplier (IRM) each year. This rate is used to calculate the change in Taxable Value from one year to the next. For both the 2023 and 2024 tax years, the IRM has been set to 1.05 (or 5%) which is the most it can be, by law. Below is the 2024 Capped Value formula, which was used to figure your Taxable (Capped) Value for the 2024 tax year:

$$\text{2024 CAPPED VALUE} = (\text{2023 Taxable Value} - \text{LOSSES}) \times 1.05 + \text{ADDITIONS}$$

You can see how a change in IRM would affect the Taxable (Capped) Value of a property and thus, how much is owed in tax. The 2025 IRM multiplier for the State of Michigan will be announced in fall 2024.



A FREE Fraud Notification service that alerts you via email when a document with your name on it is recorded at the Kent County Register of Deeds Office. This service offers homeowners a little piece of mind and protects your most valuable assets – your home and property!

Register for this free service at:
accesskent.com/fraudnotify

*Information provided by Treasurer, Laurie Lemke, who welcomes her new Deputy Treasurer,
Chris Holwerda*



BUILDING DEPARTMENT...John Stuyfzand, Building Official/Inspector

April showers brought May flowers, and summer brings permit requests for swimming pools, decks, and sheds. Be sure to see us for all your permit needs. You may be asking yourself “Do I need a permit?” The following is a quick reference guide to what you need a permit for:

- **Basement Finishes: YES.** A Building Permit is needed, along with plans showing what will be done.
- **Decks: YES.** A Building Permit is required, and plans must be submitted for review.
- **Fences: NO.** A Building Permit is not required to install fencing, however, please check with the Planning and Zoning Department for proper placement and any restrictions (height, etc.).
- **Sheds: YES and NO.** If a shed is under 200 square feet, a Building Permit is not required. However, if it is over 200 square feet, a Building Permit is required. For sheds over 200 square feet building plans and a Zoning Application must be submitted for review.
- **Pools: YES.** A permit is required for all pools (above or inground). Along with the Swimming Pool permit, a copy of the plans and a Planning and Zoning Application (showing where the pool will be located) are required. Depending on the pool, electrical and mechanical permits may also be required.

Copies of all permit applications and their requirements may be found on the Township website (www.gainestownship.org). From the Home Page, click on Forms and Documents, then scroll down to the Building Department. If you have questions, or need help, give us a call at 616-438-9076.

Keep your household projects SAFE! Pull those permits and get your inspections.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT...Dakota Swan, Assistant Planner

Exciting news! The Township has received a \$25,000 grant from Kent County for the innovative work staff has been undertaking to refresh the Township’s Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Over the last several years, Dan Wells, Community Development Director has spearheaded efforts to revamp and revise the Township’s Master Plan with the help of other staff members and input from the community. Improvements to the Zoning Ordinance have been initiated over the course of this last year and aim to enhance the readability of the document and make it easier for citizens to navigate the ordinance.

The Master Plan includes a new zoning designation, Village Residential. This designation is intended to create diverse, walkable neighborhoods with a variety of single-family housing options to promote family-oriented, owner-occupied housing that is both accessible and engaging. We are enthusiastic about having the opportunity to introduce this new concept of zoning to serve the Township as it evolves, and we are eager to create great neighborhoods for our residents. To find out more about Village Residential or any other updates, feel free to visit the Planning and Zoning page on our website, or reach out to Dan Wells, Community Development Director, or Dakota Swan, Assistant Planner. We may be reached at the Township office by calling 616-698-6640. We look forward to seeing these changes come to fruition and continuing to serve the Gaines community!



CLERK'S OFFICE...Michael A. Brew, Township Clerk

Deputy Clerk achieves MiPMC:

Congratulations to Deputy Clerk, Amber VanderMolen, for achieving her Michigan Professional Municipal Clerk Certification! Amber's dedication showed as she diligently attended the weeklong Clerk's Institute for three consecutive years. Throughout this immersive experience, she delved deep into a comprehensive array of topics.



Far surpassing the mere requisites for municipal clerks, Amber immersed herself in a rich curriculum covering diverse subjects such as advanced problem-solving techniques, adept management of challenging individuals,

fraud detection, organizational prowess, and staying abreast of dynamic election protocols. Amber's accomplishment is a testament to her perseverance and skill, and to the invaluable contributions she brings to her community.



Cemeteries Expand:

Exciting developments are underway at Blain Cemetery as expansion efforts are in full swing. A brand-new driveway, now established to the north, is set to accommodate additional cemetery plots, and plans are underway for the installation of a Columbarium.

Similar enhancements are being planned for the Dutton Cemetery, ensuring that both final resting places are thoughtfully updated to serve generations to come.

Watch out for your election ballots:

Election ballots will be mailed out to residents on the permanent and absentee ballot lists by June 27th for the August election, and September 26th for the November election.



WATER & SEWER...Tracy Lawrence, Water & Sewer Administrator

- Do you have an outstanding balance on your water & sewer account? If so, this balance plus an additional 6% penalty will be rolled to the winter tax bill as delinquent if it is not paid before October 31st. Contact the Water & Sewer Department at (616) 433-2916 for additional information.
- The testing of backflow protection devices is regulated by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). To comply with EGLE regulations, the Township is starting a Residential Cross Connection Control Program. If you have an underground sprinkling system, you will receive a test notification within the next five years. For more information, please visit www.bgua.org/crossconnection.
- We offer paperless billing and auto pay to make receiving your bill and making payment easier. If you are interested in either or both of these options, email karen.rounds@gainestownship.org to sign up.