

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP 2023 SUMMER NEWSLETTER



Office Hours:

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

Township Officers:

Supervisor

Robert DeWard
616-698-6640 Ext. 116
robert.deward@gainestownship.org

Clerk

Michael Brew
616-698-7980
michael.brew@gainestownship.org

Treasurer

Laurie Lemke
616-499-2045
laurie.lemke@gainestownship.org

Departments:

Assessor

Megan VanHoose
616-698-6640 Ext. 129
megan.vanhoose@gainestownship.org

Building Official

John Stuyfzand
616-433-8560
john.stuyfzand@gainestownship.org

Community Development

Dan Wells
616-698-6640 Ext. 119
dan.wells@gainestownship.org

Water & Sewer

Tracy Lawrence
616-431-4660
tracy.lawrence@gainestownship.org

TOWNSHIP MANAGER, Rod Weersing...

My name is Rod Weersing, I joined the Gaines Charter Township team in February of 2023 as the Township Manager. In that role, I serve as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Township. This means that I am responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Township office.

My job includes research, providing recommendations, and project management for the Township Board. I work closely with all township Department Heads on matters involving staffing, budgeting, policy, and projects. My department prepares the proposed annual budget, in conjunction with the Department Heads and Elected Officials, and presents it to the Township Board for Approval. I am also the Township representative on various committees and boards throughout the area.



Prior to joining the team at Gaines, I spent eight years as the Assistant Superintendent at Georgetown Township in Ottawa County. Before that I spent eighteen years in the banking industry where I performed the duties of branch manager, business development, loan portfolio management, and various lending roles.

With three plus months under my belt, so to speak, I am feeling comfortable in my role. I maintain an open-door policy and invite you to reach out with any problems and/or concerns you may have, and of course, positive input is welcome too!

Rod Weersing ~ rod.weersing@gainestownship.org ~ 616-698-6640 Ext. 133



Kent County sheriffs say...

“LOCK IT OR LOSE IT”!

Kent County sheriffs are reminding residents to lock their cars when not in use.

If you have questions, email our Gaines Charter Township Community Policing Officer, Deputy Jason VanderMolen at:

jason.vandermolen@kentcountymi.gov

SPECIAL RECOGNITION...

Community Policing Officer, Deputy Jason VanderMolen, has received the Gaines Chamber of Commerce's "Outstanding Person of the Year ~ Lifetime Achievement Award"!

CONGRATULATIONS DEPUTY VANDERMOLEN!



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FROM THE ASSESSOR, Megan VanHoose...

1. Why did I get this Notice of Assessment?

Notices of Assessment (sent out in February) show any increases/decreases to the assessed and taxable values from the prior year. This notice also indicates if the property is currently receiving a Principal Residence Exemption or Qualified Agricultural Exemption or was transferred (bought/sold) in the prior year. The estimated increase/decrease to your tax bill is also listed on this notice. Please visit the Assessing Department page on our website for detailed information on how to read this notice.

2. I just bought this house last year, why did my taxes go up so much this year? Your taxes went up because the taxable value was uncapped. This means that the assessed value (AV) and taxable value (TV) became the same value the year after the sale. Here is an example: if you purchase a home in 2023 with a 2023 AV of \$100,000 and a TV of \$70,000, your 2023 summer and winter tax bills will be calculated using the TV of \$70,000. In 2024, the value of your home increases with the market and a new AV of \$120,000 is calculated. The 2024 TV is then automatically set (uncapped) to equal the 2024 AV at \$120,000. The taxes you will pay in 2023 will be based on the capped TV of \$70,000 and beginning in 2024 will be calculated using the uncapped TV of \$120,000. This \$50,000 increase to the TV results in an increase in the annual tax bill of approximately \$1,400. Going forward, your taxable value will continue to increase annually, but only by the rate of inflation (with a 5% max), unless you make changes to the property, or improvements are identified by the assessing office that are missing from your assessment record card.

3. I installed a pool in May, will my summer tax bill reflect that?

No, to the Assessing office, Tax Day is December 31st of each year. This means if you add or remove anything from your property before December 31st, it will not be added or removed from your taxable value until the following year. If you install an inground pool in May 2023, you will not be taxed on it until July 2024. This is the same for a partially built home; you will be taxed in the following year for the portion of the home that exists on December 31st and the rest of the home will be taxed in the year after that. If you started construction in November 2022, but on December 31st it was only 80% complete, your 2023 tax bills will reflect a taxable value of 80%. In 2024, the remaining 20% will be added to the tax bill.

TOWNSHIP HAPPENINGS...

As your summer calendar fills up, don't forget to add:



Tuesday, August 1st: NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

4:30pm-7:30pm at South Christian High School, 7979 Kalamazoo Avenue, SE



Friday, August 4th: MOVIES IN THE PARK ~ at the Township Hall

Enjoy a Gaines Business Expo; Food Trucks, and at dusk enjoy "Puss and Boots"



Saturday, October 14th: ANNUAL TOWNSHIP HERITAGE FESTIVAL ~ at the Township Hall

Enjoy crafts, food, hayrides, a petting zoo, and so much more!

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FROM THE WATER AND SEWER ADMINISTRATOR, Tracy Lawrence...

If you plan to irrigate your yard frequently during the summer, you may want to consider purchasing an irrigation meter from the Water and Sewer Department (meter and permit fees apply). For those residents who use a large volume of water, either via an irrigation system or outside spigot, this second meter will reduce the sewer usage charges from your bill. Contact the Water Department at (616)-433-2916 for additional information.

The Township does not allow the use of fire hydrants to fill swimming pools; a hose or water hauling company must be used. The cheaper option, though more time-consuming, is to use a hose. If you know the approximate number of gallons you will use to fill your pool, the Water Department staff will calculate the additional usage cost you will see on your next bill.

The Township offers a paperless billing option. If you would prefer paperless billing, contact the Water Department at (616)-433-2916. Bills are mailed, or emailed, by the fifth day of the month. There is also an autopay option available which will automatically pull your payment from a checking or savings account on or around the 20th of the month. If interested, call the number above to set up these services. If you are using a bill payer through your online banking, be sure to leave additional days for your bank to send us the payment. Late penalties are applied to accounts if payment is not received on or before the last day of the month.



For a long time, I've been trying to figure out roundabouts...*it just feels like I'm going in circles!*

The Kent County Road Commission has begun construction of the roundabout at the intersection of 84th Street and Kalamazoo Avenue. For the entirety of the project, the intersection will be closed ~ **NO THRU TRAFFIC**. Detour routes are clearly marked and posted. Please do not use the Township Hall or Cornerstone Church driveways/parking lots as a way to avoid the posted detours.

The County conducted a comprehensive analysis of traffic patterns, crash history, and projected growth. By implementing a roundabout at this intersection, the Road Commission aims to enhance its transportation infrastructure while prioritizing safety and efficiency. Research consistently demonstrates that roundabouts have a significant, positive impact on road safety. With their ability to reduce intersection collisions, regulate traffic flow, and minimize delays, more communities across the state are embracing roundabouts as a viable and effective solution, where feasible. The circular design of the roundabout eliminates the potential for high speed, high impact collisions, thereby reducing the severity of crashes.

IT'S PICNIC TIME...

When visiting the Township Hall and its grounds, please feel free to enjoy the three (3) handicap accessible picnic tables that have been installed on the lower-level patio. Along with the picnic tables and umbrellas, five (5) Adirondack chairs and three (3) trash receptacles have been installed. The brick planters were removed last year, and the tables and chairs were installed this spring. They provide comfortable seating, with a great view of the grounds.



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CUTLERVILLE AND DUTTON FIRE DEPARTMENTS, Fire Chief Ken VanHall...

The Cutlerville and Dutton fire Departments are recruiting firefighters; we are looking for individuals who have a passion for helping others. Both departments are currently accepting applications from high energy individuals who are devoted to their community and interested in joining our fire departments.

The right applicant is committed to the community, has a minimum of a high school diploma (or GED), and is willing to commit to completing the required training. Recruits will be required to:

- Attend 295 hours of firefighter training and 250 hours of EMT training. The training is paid for by the Township, and you will be compensated for training hours.
- Pass an extensive criminal/driving record background check (no current felonies).
- Successfully pass a Physical Agility Test and a medical physical examination.
- Attend twice-monthly department trainings.
- Live within the department's service areas, which are:
 - **Dutton Fire Department coverage boundaries:**
North: 60th Street, South: 108th Street, West: Kalamazoo Ave., East: Patterson Ave.
 - **Cutlerville Fire Department coverage boundaries:**
North: 60th Street, South: 108th Street, West: Burlingame Ave., East: Kalamazoo Ave.



Contact Fire Chief Ken VanHall for more information: ken.vanhall@gainestownship.org



SAFETY TIPS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FIRES



Gathering with friends and family at a backyard fire is a summer tradition. The Cutlerville/Dutton Fire Departments remind you to do so in a safe manner. Use these tips to keep your outdoor activities "fire safe":

- Keep a hose or other water source nearby
- Contain your campfire or bonfire in a pit or ring
- Never shoot fireworks into the woods, dry grass, or shrubs
- Prevent sparks; don't put hot equipment on dry grass
- Never leave any fire, including hot coals unattended
- If you use a burn barrel, place a screen on top to prevent hot embers from escaping

When you are done with the fire, always make sure it's completely out. Extinguished coals and ashes should be left where they are if possible, and later stored in a metal can outside the home. Ashes and coals can start a serious fire many days after you think they are extinguished.