

Crystal Lake Township

2020 Winter Newsletter

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COVID-19, Township Business and Board Meetings

Just like the rest of the world, COVID has not disappeared from Benzie County. In fact, we've recently had the similar upward turn in cases as the rest of the country has experienced. Through it all, the staff remains flexible and accessible through various media, including phone, email and USPS mail. We have been recently open for limited hours and limited business, mostly all related to the election, but we anticipate continuing closures and teleconferencing the board meetings until further notice. Board meetings are held at 7 p.m., the second Tuesday, of each month. The public is welcome and urged to join at 6:55 p.m. by dialing (978) 990- 5089 followed by the access code 244952#. Once connected, announce yourself. For updates on meetings, please consult the website.

The Election

Congratulations to the 1128 registered Crystal Lake Township voters, 900 of whom cast absentee or in-person ballots on Nov. 3, 2020; an unprecedented 80% participation rate. 622 (round up to 70%) of the ballots were absentee; 277 were walk-ins, and 1 was a provisional ballot (round down to 30%).

Congratulations also to Amy Ferris who won reelection as Supervisor and to William Northway who was elected Trustee. The other officers, Richard Nielsen, Brooke Trentham Popp and Sue Sullivan, were uncontested and will continue in their respective Trustee, Treasurer and Clerk positions.

Special commendations to Kathy Picklo, Sondra Halliday, and Judy VanMeter, whose hard work and attention to detail set the stage for smooth operations on Election Day. Janet Wynne, Anne Burt, and Linda Napper managed all 622 absentee ballots efficiently and without error. Kathy Fishburn and Ruth Paris hung on late into the night to review the closing process as the Receiving Board. Twelve other election inspectors (Jay Burt, Skip Comer, Molly Comer, Leigh Hamp, Barbara Holmes, Kathleen Leach, Phong Luu, Maryellen Paull, Susan Rastelli, Elizabeth Shrake, Cathy Wilkinson and David Wynne) worked in shifts from 6 a.m. to after 8 p.m. to create an environment that was as positive and safe as possible given the large turnout and COVID-19 prevention procedures. Finally, recognition needs to be given to Kelly Luxford and her co-workers in the Frankfort Post Office for their help facilitating the prompt delivery of so many absentee ballots.

Meet the New Staff

Dr. William Northway, a new Trustee, is newly retired from a 46-year career in orthodontics. While his ancestors opened and ran the Northway Hotel in Beulah for a number of years, Bill ran a satellite practice in Beulah for thirty years. He and his wife Carin moved to Crystal Lake Township permanently in 2012. They love the area and Bill wants to give back to the community. He fills the board seat of Tammy May, who we sincerely thank for her many years of service, including work on the Planning Commission, Clean Up Events and the Airport Authority, and wish her well in her retirement from the board.

New Clerk Assistant, Sondra Halliday has recently joined a team of hard-working women assisting Sue Sullivan with the clerk's office. Sondra has ancestral roots in the community; she and her husband, Brian moved back from downstate several years ago. This team also includes veteran Kathy Picklo who, along with her husband, "retired" here, as well. We keep them busy! Sondra and Kathy have been invaluable in helping with the many tasks statutorily assigned to the clerk, particularly those having to do with elections and filing.

Accessing Your Assessments

So, you have questions about your property, or your neighbor's? Maybe you want to know a legal description, or a Property Classification, whether it has a Principal Residence Exemption or its sales history. Up until fairly recently, in our previous non-digital age, the township maintained a hard copy of all property assessments on what was most commonly referred to as one's "card." These cards were stored in the assessor's office area and, because this was information in the public realm, were readily accessible to anyone for inspection. Now, in this modern age of computers, those cards are updated to appear digitally, online. You are able to access your own card and anyone's property assessment details, simply by going to our website and searching for a "quick link" on the Home Page labeled "Link to Tax and Assessing records." You're going to appreciate all the information that you'll find at your fingertips! Try it. You'll like it! Don't have your own computer or access to the internet? We can show you how to use one of the township computers by appointment. Or if you just need a little help, we're here to help walk you through it all. Call the supervisor, Amy Ferris at her residence, (231) 352-4915 or leave a message at the hall.

Clean Up and Recycling Dates

The township sponsored clean-up events for 2021 will be 8 to 11 a.m., Sat., May 1 and Aug. 7. It will be located at the Frankfort Dow Memorial Airport, 650 Airport Rd., in Frankfort. Please go to our website for a list of acceptable and unacceptable items.



Fire Protection



If you are interested, there are plethora of documents which pertain to our Fire and First Responders services, all available online, such things as copies of our contract with the Frankfort Fire Department, the most recent budget, and more. Want to know how many times the Fire Department and First Responders were called out this past year for Crystal Lake Township residents and property owners? Then you will especially find interesting the list of fire runs.

Looking for Your Tax Receipt?



If you have ever worried whether the township received your money in a timely way, then this paragraph is for you. Tax payment receipts are available at www.bsaonline.com. The Treasurer shall issue one for every tax paid in person or by drop off. Also, when formally asked, one will be issued by mail or email. Otherwise, receipts will *not* be issued and the cancelled check is your receipt.

Constituents may also find at www.bsaonline.com tax amounts, dates due or paid, as well as a history of their tax payments. You no longer need to wonder if your money got to us. All this information is readily available, right down to the amount and day the township marked as it was received. If you are tardy in paying your taxes, the site will figure penalty amounts. You can also pay your taxes at www.bsaonline.com via electronic check (free) or by credit card (3% fee).

To Help Constituents Know What's Going On

The township is trying to make information more accessible to constituents and the general public via the website. One notable new feature is the quick link on our Home Page labeled "Meeting Materials" that will take users to all the documents pertinent to an upcoming township meeting, be it the monthly board meeting or any other, such as the monthly Planning Commission meeting. This should help everyone know what the issues at hand are. Hopefully it will assure better access to materials distributed to the board or committee members. Now the same documents that officials have in front of them to assist in their decision making, are available to any interested citizen who chooses to download them. Hard copies will be available, by request, at the township hall.