

Township Focus

APRIL/MAY 2024

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION



Who can do what? 'Lightening the load' for your clerk



Help wanted
page 1



A sneak peek of what's in store
at our Annual Conference & Expo
pages 17-26



Effective audit management:
A guide for townships
page 27



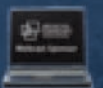
ACRISURE[®]

**PROUDLY SERVING MICHIGAN
TOWNSHIPS SINCE 1966**

At Acrisure, we're dedicated to serving Michigan townships by providing the services, products and support needed to protect what matters most. Together as your trusted partner, we're building a brighter future for our communities.

**CONTACT US TODAY AT 800-748-0554
OR [ACRISURE.COM/GREATLAKES](https://www.acrisure.com/greatlakes)**

Learn more about the Michigan Townships Association at michigantownships.org



Scholarship Sponsor



Help wanted

Getting more people in our townships to work in meaningful, productive and reasonably well-paying jobs should be a mutual priority of all leaders and stakeholders involved in your community. Employees who can't find a reasonable wage to pay for increased expenses may move out of the area to gain that income security elsewhere. Beyond the pay, there are additional considerations: Is there affordable childcare? Good school options? Good healthcare providers? Decent, affordable housing choices (or anything at all)?

I am seeking your assistance in gathering ideas and people who can share successful strategies on dealing with these labor challenges that many of our townships, not just the rural communities, are facing. I have volunteered to help the Detroit branch of the Federal Reserve Bank put together a Rural Issues Conference for early October. Specifically, I would like to organize the “future of work” topics relevant to growing or stabilizing our townships. You can help by referring to me potential speakers or stories about how and where you are witnessing success addressing these issues in your area:

- Strategies to attract skilled and unskilled labor (for example, the roles of townships, economic development organizations, community college partnerships, good schools, etc.)
- Understanding training and job placement barriers
- Impact of childcare availability and quality on employers
- Incentives aimed at attracting workers to rural areas
- Immigration and labor force

Their 2022 conference in Grand Rapids was my introduction to the Federal Reserve team producing this event. The Federal Reserve has long played a role in rural development—funding electrification, agricultural and small business lending, foreclosure avoidance, major infrastructure, healthcare, broadband, workforce training, entrepreneurship, and other programs.

Please email me (neil@michigantownships.org) with any suggestions you may have for this event. I expect to be able to distribute the presentations and contacts from the sessions. Unfortunately, this year's location will be Wisconsin or Iowa since Michigan was the host state in 2022.

Thank you for your help in sharing about Michigan's rural labor challenges and successes.



Neil

mta board of directors

Vacant, Dist. 1

Jim Nankervis, Ishpeming Township (Marquette Co.), Dist. 2

Warren Suchovsky, Lake Township (Menominee Co.), Dist. 3

Marilyn Strickland, Newton Township (Mackinac Co.), Dist. 4

Harold Koviak, Burt Township (Cheboygan Co.), Dist. 5

Sharon Schultz, Torch Lake Township (Antrim Co.), Dist. 6

Ken Lobert, Ossineke Township (Alpena Co.), Dist. 7

Marvin Radtke Jr., Green Lake Township (Grand Traverse Co.), Dist. 8
MTA Executive Committee member-at-large

Matthew Beattie, Boon Township (Wexford Co.), Dist. 9

Kimberly Anderson, Whitney Township (Arenac Co.), Dist. 10

Connie Cargill, Golden Township (Oceana Co.), Dist. 11

Yulanda Bellingar, Morton Township (Mecosta Co.), Dist. 12

Glenn Rowley, Bangor Charter Township (Bay Co.), Dist. 13

Nancy Heck, Winsor Township (Huron Co.), Dist. 14

Jennifer Hodges, Muskegon Charter Township (Muskegon Co.), Dist. 15

Kevin Beeson, Pine River Township (Griatiot Co.), Dist. 16

Joanne Boehler, James Township (Saginaw Co.), Dist. 17

Robert Lewandowski, Port Huron Charter Township (St. Clair Co.), Dist. 18

Vacant, Dist. 19

Vacant, Dist. 20

Kenneth Verkest, Harrison Charter Township (Macomb Co.), Dist. 21

Malinda Cole-Crocker, Buchanan Charter Township (Berrien Co.), Dist. 22

Donald Rogers, Coldwater Township (Branch Co.), Dist. 23

Tom Hawkins, Raisin Charter Township (Lenawee Co.), Dist. 24

Diana Lowe, Genoa Charter Township (Livingston Co.), Dist. 25

To find your MTA District, visit www.michigantownships.org or call (517) 321-6467.

postal requirements

Michigan Township Focus serves as the medium for the exchange of ideas and information for the elected and appointed officials of Michigan townships. The views expressed and the material presented by the contributors and advertisers are not to be construed as having the endorsement of the officers, board of directors, staff or membership of the Michigan Townships Association nor represent the views or positions of said parties unless specifically so stated.

Michigan Township Focus, Issue 4 April/May 2024 (ISSN 2330-9652), is published monthly, except for one combined spring issue. MTA membership provides a subscription to township board members, the manager/superintendent, planning commission chairperson and township attorney. Member counties also receive subscriptions for elected officials, the equalization director and road commission chairperson. Annual membership dues include \$33 for a one-year subscription to *Michigan Township Focus*. Additional member subscriptions are available for \$33 per year. Subscription rate for residents and firms in member townships is \$44 per year (schools and libraries may subscribe for \$33 a year).

Michigan Township Focus is a publication of the Michigan Townships Association, 512 Westshire Dr., Lansing, MI 48917-9757. Phone: (517) 321-6467; fax: (517) 321-8908; web: www.michigantownships.org. Periodicals postage paid at Lansing, MI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *Michigan Township Focus*, PO Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078.

Direct all display and classified advertising inquiries to Ashley Maher at (517) 321-6467, ext. 254 or ashley@michigantownships.org. Member rate for a classified ad in either the magazine or on the MTA website on a monthly basis is \$1 per word. Call MTA for non-member rates. Deadlines for display and classified ads in the magazine are five weeks preceding the publication date. Send ads to: PO Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078; fax: (517) 321-8908; or email: ashley@michigantownships.org.

Michigan Township Focus, © 2024

Michigan Townships Association, all rights reserved.

allied service provider index



president's round table

Acrisure

315 S. Kalamazoo Mall
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
(800) 748-0554
www.bfgroup.com

See ad on inside front cover.

Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan

1134 Municipal Way
Lansing, MI 48917
(517) 703-9030
www.mersofmich.com

Michigan Township Participating Plan

1700 Opdyke Ct.
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
(248) 371-3137
www.theparplan.com
See ad on back cover.



leadership circle

Bauchham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC

470 W. Centre Ave, Ste. A
Portage, MI 49024
(269) 382-4500
www.michigan-townshiplaw.com

Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, PC

313 S. Washington Sq.
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 371-8100
www.fosterswift.com

Mika Meyers PLC

900 Monroe Ave. NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 632-8000
www.mikameyers.com
See ad on page 15.

Consumers Energy

2400 Weiss St.
Saginaw, MI 48602
(989) 791-5608
www.consumers-energy.com

Hartleb Agency, An EMC Insurance Company Partner

5840 King Hwy.
Kalamazoo, MI 49048
(269) 385-5911
www.hartlebagency.com

Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, PC

27555 Executive Dr., Ste. 250
Farmington, MI 48331
(248) 489-4100
www.rsjalaw.com
See ad on page 7.

Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

4151 Okemos Rd.
Okemos, MI 48864
(517) 381-0100
www.fsbrlaw.com

ITC Holdings Corp.

27175 Energy Way
Novi, MI 48377
(248) 946-3000
www.itc-holdings.com



keystone club

AccuNet Website Services

2414 S. Hickory Ridge Rd.
Milford, MI 48380
(248) 684-8715
www.civicclarity.com
See ad on page 25.

DTE Energy

One Energy Plaza
Detroit, MI 48226
(800) 477-4747
www.dteenergy.com

Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority

14001 Merriman Rd.
Livonia, MI 48154
(734) 513-0318
www.mmrma.org

Rehmann

675 Robinson Rd.
Jackson, MI 49203
(517) 841-4235
www.rehmann.com

ACD.net

1800 N. Grand River Ave.
Lansing, MI 48906
(517) 999-3266
www.acd.net

Emergent Health Partners

1200 State Circle
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 477-6783
www.emergenthealth.org

Miller Canfield

150 W. Jefferson Ave., Ste. 2500
Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 963-6420
www.millercanfield.com
See ad on page 13.

TriMedia Environmental & Engineering

830 W. Washington St.
Marquette, MI 49855
(906) 228-5125
www.trimediaee.com

Carlisle Wortman Associates, Inc.

117 N. First St., Ste. 70
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 662-2200
www.cwaplan.com
See ad on page 25.

Gourdie-Fraser, Inc.

123 W. Front St., Ste. A
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 946-5874
www.gfa.tc

Nickel & Saph, Inc. Insurance Agency

44 Macomb Place
Mount Clemens, MI 48043
(586) 463-4573
www.nickelsaph.com

Wade Trim

25251 Northline Rd.
Taylor, MI 48180
(734) 947-9700
www.wadetrिम.com
See ad on page 33.

David Chapman Agency

5700 W. Mt. Hope Hwy.
Lansing, MI 48917
(517) 321-4600
www.davidchapman-agency.com

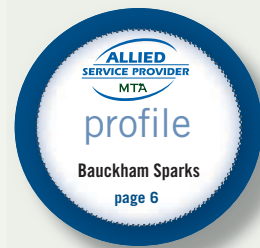
McKenna

235 E. Main St., Ste. 105
Northville, MI 48167
(248) 596-0920
www.mcka.com
See ad on page 5.

Northland Securities, Inc.

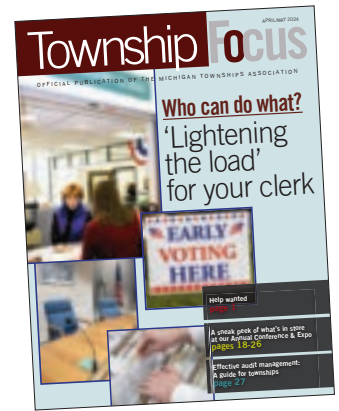
100 Maple Park Blvd.
St. Clair Shores, MI 48081
(586) 745-8065
www.northlandsecurities.com

Participation in the Allied Service Provider program does not constitute or imply MTA's endorsement of the company or its products/services.



contents

April/May 2024 | Volume 12, Number 4



Official Publication of the Michigan Townships Association

mta officers

President
Pauline Bennett, Clerk
Addison Township (Oakland Co.)

First Vice President
Connie Cargill, Treasurer
Golden Township (Oceana Co.)

Second Vice President
Harold Koviak, Supervisor
Burt Township (Cheboygan Co.)

Treasurer
Kevin Beeson, Supervisor
Pine River Township (Gratiot Co.)

Secretary
Malinda Cole-Crocker, Supervisor
Buchanan Charter Township
(Berrien Co.)

Immediate Past President
Bill Deater, Supervisor
Grant Township (St. Clair Co.)

past presidents

Peter Kleiman, Supervisor
Harris Township
(Menominee Co.)

Jeff Sorensen, Supervisor
Cooper Charter Township
(Kalamazoo Co.)

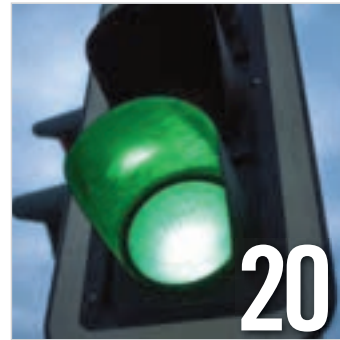
Ken Gauthier, Supervisor
Sanborn Township (Alpena Co.)

editorial & design

Publisher Neil Sheridan
Editor Jennifer Fiedler
Advertising Manager Ashley Maher
Printer Foresight Group, Lansing

mission statement

The Michigan Townships Association advances local democracy by fostering township leadership and public policy essential for a strong and vibrant Michigan.



featured articles

20


One Team: The power of 'green light decisions' in your township and beyond

MTA's 2024 Annual Conference Keynoter Paul Epstein shares his insights into how to lead a green light life and how to inspire green light communities by driving green light impact—to the benefit of yourself, your township team and your residents.

28

Who can do what ... for clerk and election duties

While clerks' statutory duties have expanded over the years with new laws and requirements impacting even the smallest townships, recent Election Law changes have radically changed the office of clerk in a way not experienced before. How can the township board help current and new clerks—and the township itself—succeed and help to lighten the load for this important elected office?



2024 Annual Conference & Expo preview!
Turn to pages 17-26 for a preview of our 2024 Annual Conference & Expo, coming to the Grand Traverse Resort April 22-25—including a keynoter sneak peek, schedule at a glance, exhibitor listing and our proposed legislative platform.

in this issue

- 1 Daily Democracy
- 4 News & Notes
- 12 Hello, MTA ... ?
- 14 Inside Lansing
- 27 Financial Forum
- 36 Knowledge Center





ARPA REPORTING REMINDER

Annual NEU Project and Expenditure Report due April 30

All non-entitlement units of government (NEUs—all but eight of Michigan’s largest townships) that accepted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds must complete their annual “Project and Expenditure Report” by **April 30**. Every NEU must complete the report, even if your township has not obligated any funds or determined how you will put them to use, or if the township has fully spent the money. The portal for reporting opens around April 1 each year.

A new, helpful one-hour webinar recording from the U.S. Department of Treasury offers a portal demonstration and overview of NEU reporting and compliance obligations. You can access the webinar from MTA’s “Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding” webpage (look under “Advocacy” on <https://michigantownships.org>).

Your township’s SAM.gov registration must be active for the reporting, and must be renewed annually. This is free of charge. Your township does not have to pay, or go through a third party, to renew your registration. (Note: SAM.gov uses a Unique Entity ID instead of a DUNS number. Visit www.SAM.gov for more information.)

Townships have until Dec. 31, 2024, to obligate their allocation of federal ARPA funds. If your township has not already done so or has not fully obligated the money—distributed to local and state governments to mitigate the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic—you should make plans now to meet the deadline. ARPA funds must be fully spent by Dec. 31, 2026. According to U.S. Treasury’s “Reporting and Compliance” guidance, updated Dec. 14, 2023, if the funds are not obligated or spent by these deadlines, they must be returned to U.S. Treasury. MTA-member officials can reach out to MTA’s Member Information Services Department for assistance or with ARPA questions at (517) 321-6467 (press option 1).

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Act NOW to help challenge and correct broadband access map

Michigan was awarded \$1.55 billion from the federal Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program to expand high-speed connectivity across the state. Townships play an incredibly important role in the challenge process—happening right now—to determine the unserved, underserved and served high-speed internet status of every home, business and community anchor institution in the state.



The challenge process runs through April 23. **It is critical for townships to participate to ensure that no locations are left out of this program.** The results of the challenge process will yield the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office’s (MIHI) final list of locations that will be eligible for funding under the state’s BEAD allocation.

Townships can review the Michigan Broadband Map (www.michiganbroadbandmap.com), which allows local officials and residents to view the status of your locations. If unserved or underserved locations appear as served, your township can participate in the challenge process. This is your only opportunity to confirm and correct your township’s connectivity, and help improve access in your community.

Additional information on the challenge process can also be found on MIHI’s BEAD webpage (visit www.michigan.gov/leo; click on “Bureaus & Agencies,” then “Michigan High-Speed Internet Office.”)

AGREEMENT AMENDMENTS

April 15 deadline for early voting plan changes

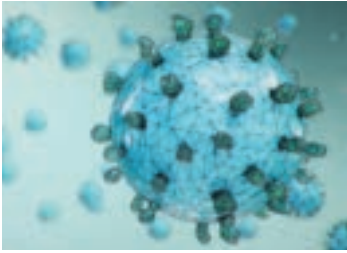
If your township provided early voting as a single municipality for the Feb. 27 presidential primary and would like to alter your early voting method, the township has until April 15 to do so.

Under MCL 168.720d, a local unit can enter into a municipal or county agreement to provide early voting for the remaining state and federal elections in 2024 and 2025 until April 15, 2024. The agreement may be a new agreement or an amendment to an existing agreement as long as all parties involved agree to the amendment. After April 15, the only change that can be made to an existing agreement in 2024 is the withdrawal from the agreement—which is allowed until June 7, 2024; a municipality that withdraws during this time must provide early voting as a single municipality for the remainder of 2024 and 2025.

Contact elections@michigan.gov with any questions.

COVID CONSIDERATIONS

Review township policies following updated CDC COVID-19 recommendations



Townships may need to update their COVID-19 sick time policies or isolation guidelines, following updated recommendations from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The new guidance brings a unified approach to addressing risks from common respiratory viral illnesses, such as COVID-19, flu and

RSV, in community settings. The recommendations suggest returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall and if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication.

Once people resume normal activities, continued CDC recommendations are to take additional prevention strategies for the next five days to curb disease spread, such as taking more steps for cleaner air, enhancing hygiene practices (such as hand washing), wearing a well-fitting mask, keeping a distance from others, and/or getting tested for respiratory viruses. Enhanced precautions are especially important to protect those most at risk for severe illness, including those over 65 and people with weakened immune systems.

The CDC noted that its updated guidance reflects how the circumstances around COVID-19 in particular have changed, with the availability of treatments and fewer hospitalizations and deaths resulting from COVID-19.

MTA's lunchtime learning series, *Now You Know*, offers timely updates, insights from our experts and a chance to get your questions answered—all in just one hour! Don't miss our upcoming episodes:



April 10: Public Use of Township Property and Facilities—The relationship status for a township and its property is complicated. *Who "owns" township property? Does "publicly owned" mean "open to the public?" Who decides how a township's property will or will not be used or accessed?* Every township board member needs to be aware of the legal issues regarding township real estate, facilities and equipment. Get a better understanding of the board's role and responsibilities, including when to involve the township's attorney or other consultants.

May 8: Cemetery Services—Once considered memorial parks, cemeteries over time evolved to be solely places of burial. In today's world, families seek different options for memorializing their loved ones. Cemeteries also provide other community services or interests, like historical walks, tours, running and walking, and other events. Review ways your township can offer updated burial services and learn how to incorporate your cemetery into your overall park plan.

Register at <https://bit.ly/NYKmta> for just \$25 per session!

If your township subscribes to MTA Online at the Premium level, you get FREE access to **EVERY** session! For details, and to see a listing of past episodes available on demand, visit <https://learn.michigantownships.org/nyk>.

LOCAL UPDATES FROM ACROSS MICHIGAN

Township happenings

After 14 years of work on the project, a new canoe and kayak launch offering an additional, safe point of access to the Shiawassee River has opened in **Holly Township** (Oakland Co.). A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the launch site, which is great for all ages and abilities with accessible parking and a ramp down to the river. River users can ring the bell hanging over the water at the launch. Individual donations and grant monies helped to complete the project.

Tuscarora Township (Cheboygan Co.) has received a \$200,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity for repairs, renovations and upgrades to the township hall—including spaces used by the library, police department and the public. With over 1,000 applicants, the township was one of just 22 local governments to receive a grant award, which will help with improvements including new gutters, improved parking lot lighting, installation of a modern fire alarm system and security system, among other repairs and upgrades. The grant application was a team effort by Supervisor **Bob Kramer**, Deputy Supervisor **Ron Odenwald**, Library Director **Kelsey Rutkowski** and Police Chief **Gordon Temple**.

Email YOUR Township Happenings to jenn@michigantownships.org. Add MTA to your newsletter mailing list! Mail to MTA, Attn. Jenn Fiedler, PO Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078, or email to jenn@michigantownships.org.

**PLANNING
DESIGN
BUILDING**

MCKENNA

From plan to reality—
and everything in between.
We can help you get there.

Building Codes. Regulation. Zoning Administration. Our team of professionals are experts at making sense of the intricacies that ensure that spaces are safe, functional, and built in accordance with existing laws and codes. We assist city officials with code enforcement, inspections, plan review, and more.

MCKA.COM
888.226.4326

**ALLIED
SERVICE PROVIDER
MTA**

Come to our 2024 Conference and join the parade! The Township Parade of Flags kicks off the Conference's Opening Session on Tuesday, April 23.

Each year, dozens of township flags and flag bearers assemble on the main stage of our Annual Conference—a moving and even emotional salute to the government closest to the people. **If you've never attended MTA's Annual**



Conference and experienced the stirring Township Parade of Flags, you don't want to miss out! Register today to take part in the parade—what some attendees call “the most inspirational part of the Conference!” To register, email your interest to jenn@michigantownships.org or fax this form to (517) 321-8908 or by **April 8**. Parade instructions will be emailed to participants prior to Conference.

Township/County _____

Contact Person _____

Email Address _____

Questions? Call Jenn Fiedler at (517) 321-6467, ext. 229 or email jenn@michigantownships.org.

Two caucus elections to be held at 2024 Conference to elect new district directors to MTA Board

Two caucus elections will be held April 23, during the 2024 MTA Annual Conference at the Grand Traverse Resort, to elect new district directors to the MTA Board of Directors. Caucuses will be held for **District 11**, which encompasses Lake, Mason and Oceana Counties; and **District 20**, which encompasses Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties. Elected officials from MTA-member townships in Districts 11 and 20 are eligible to run for the MTA Board.

Officials who wish to run for district director can campaign for the position before the caucus, though there are no requirements for prior announcement of candidacy. Per MTA Bylaws, candidates must have completed at least one full elected term as a township official to qualify. The time and location for the caucus elections will be published in the Conference program received on-site.

profile



Advertorial

Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC

Dedicated to helping Michigan townships

Although the firm's name has changed throughout the years, Bauckham Thall's focus on providing a full-service experience for its municipal law clients has remained consistent since its inception. That dedication to helping Michigan townships is why the Michigan Townships Association chose Bauckham Thall as its general counsel when it incorporated in 1953, and why MTA continues to rely on the firm's expertise on all issues concerning township law still to this day.



Bauckham Thall understands from experience that no two townships are the same, and bases its practice on a client-first approach, to make sure the needs of each individual township are met. The firm accomplishes this by carefully listening to township officials, who best know the needs of their local communities and the practical difficulties in providing those needs. This allows the firm's attorneys to apply a fact-specific approach that finds the most appropriate solution for the township and its citizens.

This level of personalized service is why clients continue to trust Bauckham Thall as their general counsel and why so many more choose to hire the firm for special counsel for their most difficult issues.

Find out more at www.michigantownshiplaw.com, or call (269) 382-4500 to speak to a firm attorney personally to find out how they can provide a better value for your home community.

Opinions expressed within do not represent the views of MTA, its Board or members. Participation in the Allied Service Provider program does not constitute or imply MTA's endorsement of the company or its products/services. For more information, visit Bauckham Thall's booth at the 2024 MTA Expo, or hear from firm attorneys at numerous MTA Conference educational sessions. To learn more about Allied Service Providers, turn to page 2 or visit the Allied Service Provider Directory and program webpages at www.michigantownships.org.

classified

HELP WANTED

Assessor—Liberty Township (Wexford Co.) is seeking an assessor with at least Michigan Certified Assessing Officer (MCAO) certification and five years of experience, including APEX drawing software. This part-time position is for a township of 847 total parcels: 799 residential, with the remaining comprised of Michigan Department of Transportation and Department of Natural Resources land, and four commercial sites. Direct your questions and/or resumé to Supervisor Monroe at (989) 751-0379 or monroeachers@yahoo.com.

Want to place a classified in Township Focus or on www.michigantownships.org? Visit www.michigantownships.org/classifieds for more information, email ashley@michigantownships.org, or call (517) 321-6467, ext. 254.

mta dates & events | april

8 Deadline to register for MTA's Annual Conference at the regular rates. After this date, late rates apply.

10 Public Use of Township Facilities *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar

22-25 MTA's Annual Educational Conference & Expo at the Grand Traverse Resort. See pages 17-26 or visit <https://www.michigantownships.org> for details. On-site registrations are accepted. See you in Grand Traverse!

mta events | may

8 Cemetery Services *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar

15 *The ABCs of ZBAs* workshop, Gaylord

22 *The ABCs of ZBAs* workshop, Frankenmuth

29 *The ABCs of ZBAs* workshop, Kalamazoo

Announcements

MTA office closed for Annual Conference—The MTA office will be closed April 22-26, while MTA staff is at the Annual Educational Conference at the Grand Traverse Resort. You may call the MTA office and leave messages for staff at (517) 321-6467. The office re-opens on Monday, April 29.

April and May Township Focus combined—*Reminder:* The April and May issues of *Township Focus* are combined into this month's issue. The next issue you receive will be in June.

Robinson Scholarship deadline is May 31

Help ensure that today's youth become involved in local government tomorrow! Encourage students in *your* community to apply for MTA's Robert R. Robinson Memorial Scholarship by **Friday, May 31**. Help us spread the word in your township's newsletters, social media or website.

The scholarship is a way for MTA to support college students who are pursuing a career in local government—and can further inspire their dedication to serving Michigan's communities. The scholarship is a one-time award determined on a competitive basis by the applicant's academic achievement, community involvement and commitment to a career in local government administration. Applicants must be a junior, senior or graduate student enrolled in a Michigan college or university. The following is required to apply: 1) a letter of recommendation from a professor or instructor, 2) a copy of a resolution of support from a Michigan township board, and 3) a short essay on an important issue facing local government.

Students must submit application materials to: Michigan Townships Association, PO Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078 or email angie@michigantownships.org. For more information, visit <https://michigantownships.org> (under the "About" tab), or contact jenn@michigantownships.org or (517) 321-6467, ext. 229.



We Know Local Government Matters



ROSATI | SCHULTZ
JOPPICH | AMTSBUECHLER

Our team of 26 experienced municipal lawyers is ready to help you!

Municipal General Counsel
Civil Litigation & Appeals
Code Enforcement & Prosecution

RSJALAW.COM

Farmington Hills: 248-489-4100

Lansing: 517-886-3800



APRIL

1 *No later than April 1.* Treasurers make final adjustment and delivery of the total amount of tax collections on hand. (MCL 211.43(3)(c))

No later than April 1. Assessors are required to annually provide parcel information from any Form 5819 *Qualified Heavy Equipment Rental Personal Property Exemption Claim*, and any Form 5076 *Small Business Property Tax Exemption Claim under MCL 211.9o* for any taxpayer with more than \$80,000 but less than \$180,000 in true cash value, and other parcel information required by the state Department of Treasury in a form and manner required by the department. (MCL 211.9o and 211.9p)

No later than April 1. Assessors are required to annually provide information from any Form 5277 *Affidavit to Rescind Exemption of Eligible Manufacturing Personal Property Defined in MCL 211.9(m) and 211.9(n)* and any Form 5278 *Eligible Manufacturing Personal Property Tax Exemption Claim, Personal Property Statement, and Report of Fair Market Value of Qualified New and Previously Existing Personal Property* (Combined Document) and other parcel information required by the state Department of Treasury in a form and manner required by the department. (MCL 211.9m and 9n)

On or before the first Monday in April. Board of review must complete its review of protests of assessed value, taxable value, property classification or denial by assessor of continuation of qualified agricultural property exemption. (MCL 211.30a)

District or intermediate school district must reach agreement for summer tax collection

with township if there is a summer school levy. (MCL 380.1613(2))

2 Beginning of period of required daily collection of election materials from absent voter (AV) drop boxes on each day clerk's office is open. (MCL 168.761d)

3 Supervisor or assessor shall deliver the completed assessment roll, with board of review certification, to the county equalization director not later than the 10th day after adjournment of the board of review or the Wednesday following the first Monday in April, whichever date occurs first. (MCL 211.30(7))

Assessor shall file Form 606 (L-4021) *Assessment Roll Changes Worksheet* with the county equalization department, and Form 607 (L-4022) *Report of Assessment Roll Changes and Classification* (signed by the assessor) with the county equalization department and State Tax Commission (STC) immediately following adjournment of the board of review. (STC Rule 209.26(6a), (6b))

8 Deadline for days and hours for voter registration at clerk's office for May 7 election to be published in the newspaper. If considered advisable by township clerk, notice may also be posted in at least two conspicuous places in each precinct. Notice must also include offices and proposals that will be on the ballot. (MCL 168.498)

Clerk shall post and enter into the Qualified Voter File (QVF) the hours the clerk's office will be open on the Saturday or Sunday or both immediately before May 7 election to issue and receive AV ballots. (MCL 168.761b)

Clerk shall post and enter into QVF any additional locations and hours the clerk will be available to issue and receive AV ballots, if applicable. (MCL 168.761b)

9 Clerks intending to process or tabulate AV ballots before May 7 election must submit written notice to the Secretary of State. (MCL 168.765a)

15 *On or before the third Monday in April.* Allocation board meets and receives budgets. (MCL 211.210)

A township that conducted early voting as a single municipality for Feb. 27 presidential primary may enter into a municipal agreement or county agreement for the remaining statewide and federal elections in the election cycle. (MCL 168.720d)

16 Deadline for precinct inspectors for May 7 election to be appointed by the local election commission. (MCL 168.674)

17 Deadline to post notice on website (if available) and in clerk's office of the location, dates, hours and number of election inspectors for AV counting place if processing and tabulating AV ballots before May 7 election. (MCL 168.765a)

22 Deadline to register by mail or online and be eligible to vote for May 7 election. (MCL 168.497)

23 *through May 7.* In-person registration for May 7 election with clerk with proof of residency. (MCL 168.497)

Nominating petitions and Affidavits of Identity for partisan and nonpartisan candidates on the Aug. 6 ballot due. Withdrawal deadline elapses at 4 p.m. on April 26.

26 Write-in candidates for May 7 election file declaration of intent forms due to respective filing official by 4 p.m. (MCL 168.737a)

Electors may submit a written request until 5 p.m. to spoil their absent voter ballot and receive a new ballot by mail for May 7 election. (MCL 168.765b(1))

Electors may submit a written request until 5 p.m. to spoil their absent voter ballot and receive a new ballot in person for May 7 election in the clerk's office. (MCL 168.765b(3))

By 27 County clerks deliver remainder of ballots and election supplies for May 7 election to township clerks. (MCL 168.714)

29 Townships with a population of at least 5,000 may begin processing and tabulating AV ballots. (MCL 168.765a)

Deadline for clerk to forward names and addresses of partisan and nonpartisan candidates for the Aug. 6 ballot to county clerk. (MCL 168.349, 168.321)

30 Deadline to publish notice of May 7 election. One notice required. (MCL 168.653a)

Deadline for challenges against nomination petitions filed by partisan and nonpartisan candidates on the Aug. 6 ballot submitted to filing official. (MCL 168.552)

Petitions to place local ballot question on the Aug. 6 ballot must be filed with applicable local or county clerk by 5 p.m. (MCL 168.646a)

MAY

1 Deadline for filing a *Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) Active Duty Military Affidavit* (Form 4660) to allow military personnel to retain a PRE for up to three years if they rent or lease their principal residence while away on active duty. (MCL 211.7dd)

Deadline for filing Form 2599 *Claim for Farmland (Qualified Agricultural) Exemption from Some School Operating Taxes* with local assessor if property is not classified agricultural or if assessor asks an owner to file it to determine whether the property includes structures that are not exempt. (MCL 211.7ee(2))

2 Deadline for public logic and accuracy test for May 7 election. Notice must be published at least 48 hours before test. (MCL 168.798)

Beginning of period when clerk must verify or reject AV ballot application or return envelope by end of calendar day the application or envelope is received. (MCL 168.766b)

3 *Until 4 p.m.* Deadline for applicant to cure signature deficiency on application to receive AV ballot for May 7 election by mail. (MCL 168.761)

By 5 p.m. Clerks must send AV ballots by mail for May 7 election. (MCL 168.759)

By 5 p.m. Deadline for electors who have lost their AV ballot or not yet received their ballot in the mail to submit a written request to spoil their AV ballot and receive a new AV ballot for May 7 election in clerk's office or by mail. (MCL 168.765b(5))

6 *On or before first Monday in May.* Assessor shall tabulate tentative taxable value as approved by board of review and as modified by county equalization for each classification of property separately equalized for each unit of local government and provide tabulated tentative taxable values to county equalization director on STC Form 4626. (MCL 211.34d(2))

Deadline for assessor to file tabulation of taxable valuations for each classification of property with the county equalization director on STC Form 609 (L-4025) *Report of Taxable Valuations Including Additions, Losses and Totals as Approved by the Board of Review* to be used in "Headlee" calculations. (MCL 211.34d(2))

Before 4 p.m. Deadline for electors who have lost their AV ballot or not yet received their ballot in the mail for May 7 election to submit a written request to spoil their AV ballot and receive a new AV ballot in clerk's office. (MCL 168.765b(7))

Any township may begin processing and tabulating AV ballots for May 7 election. (MCL 168.765a)

7 Emergency absentee voting for May 7 election until 4 p.m. (*Begins May 3 at 5 p.m.*) (MCL 168.759b)

Election Day registrants may obtain and vote an AV ballot in person in clerk's office or vote in person in the proper precinct until 8 p.m. (MCL 168.761)

Election Day.

8 Configuration set(s) for tabulator(s) must be selected for Aug. 6 election. (MCL 168.720j)

Local board of election commissioners that establishes Election Day vote

center for Aug. 6 election must inform county clerk that vote center will be established. (MCL 168.523b)

9 Boards of county canvassers meet to canvass May 7 election by 9 a.m.

10 *Until 5 p.m.* Deadline for voter to cure signature on AV ballot return envelope, allowing an otherwise valid ballot to be accepted for tabulation for May 7 election. (MCL 168.766)

13 Deadline for ballot submitted by a military or overseas (MOVE) voter and postmarked on or before May 7 to be deemed timely received and counted. (Mich Const, Art II, Sec 4)

14 Deadline for local clerk to deliver MOVE ballots received within six days of Election Day (May 7) and ballots with a signature that was cured after Election Day and by 5 p.m. the third day after Election Day to the county clerk. (MCL 168.759a)

Ballot wording of proposals qualified to appear on Aug. 6 ballot certified to local or county clerks by 4 p.m. (MCL 168.646a)

By 15

Deadline for assessors to report current year taxable

value of commercial personal property and industrial personal property to county equalization director. The current year taxable value of commercial personal property and industrial personal property shall be the taxable value on May 10, 2024. (MCL 123.1353(3))

Not later than this date, the state must have prepared an annual assessment roll for the state-assessed properties. (MCL 207.9(1))

16 Deadline for township clerks receiving ballot wording for Aug. 6 election to forward to county clerk. (MCL 168.646a)

20 Deadline for payments to municipalities from the Local Community Stabilization Authority: For underpayment of the 2023 personal property tax reimbursement and remaining balance of Local Community Stabilization Share revenue. (MCL 123.1357(8)(d))

23 Beginning of period for regular inspection of AV drop boxes to ensure compliance with requirements, and of period for required AV drop box video monitoring (for all drop boxes ordered or installed after Oct. 1, 2020) for Aug. 6 election. (MCL 168.761d)



Townships need engineers who aim to see farther together.

Prein & Newhof

(616) 364-8491
www.preinnewhof.com

calendar

28 *Fourth Monday in May. May 27 is a state holiday.* Final state equalization order issued by STC. (MCL 209.4)

29 Deadline for petitions to place a legislative initiative proposal on Nov. 5 ballot to be filed with the Secretary of State. (MCL 168.471)

31 *By Friday following the fourth Monday in May.* If as a result of state equalization, the taxable value of property changes, equalization director shall revise millage reduction fractions. (MCL 211.34d(2))

Appeals of property classified as commercial real, industrial real, developmental real, commercial personal, industrial personal or utility personal must be made by filing a written petition with the Michigan Tax Tribunal on or before May 31 of the tax year involved. (MCL 205.735a(6))

**Early voting is optional for the May 7 election. For May 7 election early voting dates, visit www.michigan.gov/elections.*

JUNE

1 Deadline for filing Form 2368 *Principal Residence Exemption* (PRE) affidavit for exemption from 18-mill school operating tax to qualify for a PRE for summer tax levy. (MCL 211.7cc(2))

Deadline for filing the initial request of a *Conditional Rescission of PRE* (Form 4640) for summer tax levy. (MCL 211.7cc(5))

Deadline for filing Form 4983 *Foreclosure Entity Conditional*

Rescission of a PRE (Form 4983) to qualify for summer tax levy. (MCL 211.77cc(5))

Assessment roll due to county treasurer if local unit is not collecting summer taxes. (MCL 211.905b(6)(a))

3 *Not later than June 1. June 1 is a Saturday.* Requests due from a tax increment finance, local development financing or downtown development authority for state reimbursements of tax increment revenue decreases as a result of the Michigan Business Tax (MBT) reduction in personal property taxes. (Form 4650; MCL 125.4312b(2), MCL 12.4411b(2), MCL 125.4213c(2))

By first Monday in June. Deadline for notifying protesting taxpayers in writing of board of review action. (MCL 211.30(4))

7 Deadline for assessors to report 2023 and 2024 taxable values for each renaissance zone on 2024 *Renaissance Zone Tax Reimbursement Data* (Form 3369). (MCL 125.2692)

Deadline for townships to establish, move or abolish a polling place for Aug. 6 election. Beginning of period during which township board or board of county election commissioners may not establish, move or abolish a polling place, early voting site or central polling place, unless damaged, destroyed or rendered inaccessible or unusable. (MCL 168.662)

Clerk must inform applicable county clerk that AV counting board has been authorized by local board of election commissioners for Aug. 6 election. (MCL 168.764d)

Location of each early voting site for Aug. 6 election must be finalized. (MCL 168.720j)

10 *Not later than the second Monday in June.* Allocation board must issue final order. (MCL 211.216)

17 *Not later than June 15. June 15 is a Saturday.* Requests due from a brownfield redevelopment authority for state reimbursements of tax increment revenue decreases as a result of MBT reduction in personal property taxes. (MCL 125.2665a(2))

Deadline for tax increment finance (TIF) authorities to file TIF loss reimbursement claims Form 5176 *Request for State Reimbursement of Tax Reimbursement of Tax Increment Finance Authority Personal Property TIF loss for NON-Brownfield Authorities*, Form 5176BR *Request for State Reimbursement of Tax Increment Finance Authority Personal Property TIF Loss for Brownfield Authorities*, or Form 5176ICV *Tax Increment Financing Personal Property Loss Reimbursement for Authorities with Increased Captured Value Loss*. (MCL 123.1356a(3))

Deadline to submit Water Pollution Control PA 451 of 1994 Part 37 (MCL 324.3702 and R 209.76) and Air Pollution Control PA 451 of 1994 Part 59 (MCL 324.5902 and R 209.81) tax exemption applications to STC.

Deadline for assessor's report to STC on the status of each neighborhood "homestead" exemption granted under the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone Act. (MCL 207.786(2))

22 Beginning of period during which clerk must make reasonable effort to verify or reject AV ballot application or return envelope for Aug. 6 election by end of business day after application or envelope is received. (MCL 168.766b)

County clerk must provide municipal clerk or early voting site coordinator with programming for electronic voting equipment to be used at early voting site for Aug. 6 election. (MCL 168.720j)

Deadline for clerks to electronically transmit or mail (as requested) an AV ballot to each absent uniformed services or overseas voter who applied for an AV ballot 45 days or more before Aug. 6 election. (MCL 168.759a, Mich. Const., Art II, Sec 4)

Deadline for county clerks to deliver AV ballots for Aug. 6 election to local clerks. (MCL 168.714)

Notice of polling place or early voting site must be provided for sites newly established or changed by 60 days before Aug. 6 election. (MCL 168.662)

27 Beginning of period secure drop boxes must be accessible 24 hours each day (until 8 p.m. on Election Day). (Mich. Const., Art II, Sec 4)

28 *June 30 is a Sunday.* Supervisor shall prepare and furnish the summer tax roll before June 30 to township treasurer with supervisor's collection warrant attached if summer school taxes are to be collected. (MCL 380.1612(1))

Plante Moran Cresa is now



We're built different, able to apply end-to-end, and industry-specific, expertise across your real estate needs.

Facility Assessments & Capital Planning

Space Programming & Utilization

Real Estate Highest & Best Use

Development Advisory/P3

pmrealpoint.com/government



Can a township board member also work as a township employee?

Yes, Michigan law allows township boards to assign additional, non-statutory duties to township board members (MCL 15.183) and to authorize payment for those services, as the township board deems reasonable. (MCL 41.96)

Note that this is an exception to the rule: The Incompatible Public Offices Act, Public Act 566 of 1978 (MCL 15.181, *et seq.*), states that a public officer shall not hold two or more incompatible offices at the same time. (MCL 15.182)

“Incompatible offices” are public offices held by a public official that, when the official is performing the duties of any of the public offices held by the official, result in:

1) The subordination of one public officer to another; 2) the supervision of one public office by another; or 3) a breach of duty of public office. (MCL 15.181(b)) Since the township board is the employer, any employment position with the township would result in that position being subordinate to and under the supervision of the township board.

But, in a township with a population of less than 40,000, the Incompatible Public Offices Act allows:

- 1) Public officers or public employees of the township to serve, with or without compensation, as emergency medical services personnel, or
- 2) to serve, with or without compensation, as a firefighter, police chief, fire chief, police officer or public safety officer in that township if that firefighter, police chief, fire chief, police officer or public safety officer is not a person who negotiates a collective bargaining agreement with the township on behalf of the firefighters, police chiefs, fire chiefs, police officers or public safety officers, or
- 3) the township board may choose to authorize a public officer or public employee to perform, with or without compensation, other additional services for the unit of local government. (MCL 15.183(4))

Note that townships with a population of 40,000 or more cannot assign to a township board member additional duties that would result in an incompatible office, which includes any employment position, even the positions of emergency medical services personnel, firefighter or police officer.

A township board is never required to give additional duties to a board member, and a township board may feel it is inappropriate to do so.

A township board member is not prohibited from voting to assign him- or herself additional duties or to establish the compensation for the additional duties (*Burton Township v. Speck*, 1 Mich. App. 339, 1965).

But a board member seeking additional duties may want to evaluate the appropriateness of voting on the

question. Note that, in a charter township, a board member may abstain only if the other members present unanimously vote to allow him or her to abstain. (MCL 42.7)



How is a township board member compensated for these additional services?

A township supervisor, clerk or treasurer may only be compensated for the statutory duties of his or her office through the salary of that office. The trustee position may be compensated by salary, by per diem or per meeting payments, or by a combination of salary and per diem/per meeting payments.

MCL 15.183 states that a township official may perform the duties listed with or without compensation; no statute requires that a township official be compensated for additional services.

However, because additional services must, by definition, be outside the statutory duties of an official's office, the salary of the office does not cover those additional services. A township board may authorize a township official to be compensated for performing additional services. The additional services should be specified by the board in a job description, and the compensation should be established and authorized before the additional duties are performed.

For example, if a township board votes to authorize a trustee to perform the additional service of managing the transfer station:

- 1) The salary of the office of trustee must be a fixed amount, and both (or all four) trustees must be paid the same salary (in a township where the trustees are paid by salary). The trustee salary cannot differ from one trustee to another based on years of service, merit, etc. The salary cannot be decreased during the four-year term of office. If the township board establishes the board salaries, the salary resolution is subject to petition for referendum. If the township holds an annual meeting, the trustee salary is subject to annual meeting approval. If the township has a salary compensation commission, the trustee salary is subject to the commission's determination.
- 2) The compensation of the transfer station manager may be a salary or an hourly wage. It may be adjusted by the township board to reflect pay increases or decreases, years of service, bonuses, merit increases, or number of hours worked. The compensation for additional duties given to a township board member is not subject to annual meeting or salary compensation commission approval. It is not subject to referendum. If the township board member leaves office, he or she loses the additional duties and is not eligible for unemployment insurance for those duties

(because they are additional duties of an elective office), although the township board could subsequently hire (or rehire; see below) the individual for the job.



I am a township employee. Can I run for a township board position?

Yes, as long as you are eligible to hold office in the township, you may run for a township board position.

However, the Michigan Political Activities by Public Employees Act, Public Act 169 of 1976 (MCL 15.401, *et seq.*), governs how township employees may be involved in political activities.

Under that act, unless contrary to a collective bargaining agreement, the township board may require a candidate for township office to take a leave of absence without pay when the candidate files or 60 days before the election, whichever is closer to the election. (MCL 15.403)

Once the election is certified and before you take the oath of office, however, you must either resign (a letter of resignation is recommended) or, if the township is under 40,000 in population and the option is specifically available in your township, you may request a leave of absence from your employment with the township.

The option to request a leave of absence (if that option is provided by the township) is available only to a person who

holds an employment position with a township of under 40,000 in population, because the option to hold (even as a leave of absence) or to be assigned an employment position with the township is limited to townships under 40,000.

The board in a township under 40,000 in population may then vote to authorize you to perform, with or without compensation, any of the duties in MCL 15.183(4).

Note that, even though a sitting board member could serve as an emergency medical technician (EMT), firefighter or police officer, and a township EMT, firefighter or police officer could be appointed to fill a township board vacancy without having to resign, a township EMT, firefighter or police officer elected to township board office must resign under MCL 15.403(2) before taking the oath. The board in a township of under 40,000 may then hire them back in their previous position under the Incompatible Offices Act (MCL 15.183).

But the key word is “may.” A township board is under no obligation to give a board member additional duties. Being a local legislator is a significant undertaking, so take a moment to evaluate whether you can adequately represent your community as a whole while also working for the township.

Hello, MTA ... ? provides general information on typical questions asked by township officials. Readers are encouraged to contact an attorney when specific legal guidance is needed. Member township officials and personnel may contact MTA Member Information Services with questions or requests from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays, at (517) 321-6467 (press 1) or fax (517) 321-8908.



The Law Firm For MUNICIPALITIES

CAPITAL PROJECTS & INFRASTRUCTURE
CONSTRUCTION AGREEMENTS & LITIGATION
DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/INCENTIVES

ELECTIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL & REGULATORY LAW
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS
LABOR & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
LOCAL, STATE & FEDERAL TAX

OMA/FOIA
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
REAL ESTATE
STATE/FEDERAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS
TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

From innovative projects and municipal bonds to collaborative agreements and tax increment financing, cities and villages and their attorneys throughout Michigan rely on Miller Canfield’s 170+ years of collective wisdom and diverse expertise.



THOMAS COLIS
+1.313.496.7677 | colis@millercanfield.com

JEFFREY ARONOFF
+1.313.496.7678 | aronoff@millercanfield.com

millercanfield.com/
PublicLaw



Legislative lowdown

A quick look at critical bills that MTA is following as they move through the legislative process. Watch our weekly *Township Insights* e-newsletter for updates.

SB 10 & HB 4036: Public utilities—Prohibits local units of government from imposing a ban on the use of natural gas or installation of natural gas infrastructure. *MTA opposes.*

SB 17: Fireworks—Modifies the days that fireworks use may be regulated by a local unit of government and increases penalties for certain violations. *MTA supports.*

SB 40: Unemployment—Increases maximum number of unemployment benefit weeks. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 41: Construction—Prohibits local units from enacting an ordinance prohibiting use of energy-efficient appliances in new or existing residential buildings. *MTA opposes.*

SB 47: Farmland—Allows relinquishment of portion of farmland from agreement or easement to make boundaries more regular. *MTA neutral.*

SBs 95-96, 454-455 & HBs 4894-4895: Disabled veterans' property tax reimbursement—Provides a mechanism for the state to reimburse local units of government for the property tax exemption available to veterans classified as 100% disabled and their surviving spouses. *MTA supports.*

SB 150: Michigan Tax Tribunal—Expands methods for tax tribunal to hold small claims hearings to include telephonically or by videoconferencing. *MTA supports.*

SB 155: Voting equipment—Prohibits use of electronic voting systems that contain certain parts or equipment. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 171 & HB 4231: Local government—Repeals the Fair and Open Competition in Governmental Construction Act. *MTA supports.*

SBs 182-183 & HBs 4274-4275: Revenue Sharing Trust Fund—Establishes a “Revenue Sharing Trust Fund” and dedicates portion of general sales tax revenue to the fund to

distribute to townships, cities, villages and counties. *MTA supports.*

SB 244 & HB 4729: Workers' compensation—Extends presumption of causation of heart and respiratory diseases to certain members of police, fire and public safety departments. *MTA opposes.*

SB 293: Housing—Modifies and expands the Housing and Community Development Fund to make financing available to middle-income households. *MTA supports.*

SBs 401-404: Elections—Creates state voting rights act. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 473 & HB 4694: Special assessments—Amends required number of participating members from each local unit for special assessment districts for police and fire. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 480: Land division—Modifies the number of parcels resulting from land division. *MTA opposes.*

SBs 486-487 & 489: Mobile home licensing—Modifies licensure requirements for owners of mobile home parks and seasonal mobile home parks and the duties of entities involved in the regulation of parks. *MTA supports.*

SBs 549-554 & HBs 5090-5093: Water utilities—Creates water rate affordability program and shutoff protections. *MTA monitoring.*

SBs 559-562, 569 & HBs 5907, 5104-5107: Strategic fund—Revises Critical Industry Program and Michigan Strategic Site Readiness Program, and creates Michigan 360 program. *MTA supports.*

SBs 603-604: Elections—Modifies election recount process at municipal and statewide level, increases current filing deposit amounts for all recounts, and introduces a new deposit for recounts of ballot questions. *MTA monitoring.*

SBs 605-607: Environment—Modifies environmental cleanup standards to residential and safe drinking water standards unless technically infeasible and excludes cleanup criteria and target detection limits in definition of a rules. *MTA opposes.*

SBs 669-670: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)—Amends FOIA to add

and modify definitions to include the Legislature and executive office of governor or lieutenant governor. *MTA neutral.*

SBs 683-684: Animals—Provides for potentially dangerous dogs and dangerous dogs in the animals act and creates sentencing guidelines for related crimes. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4012: Speed limits—Modifies procedure for establishing speed limits. *MTA supports.*

HB 4023: Underground storage tanks—Revises placement distance of underground storage tanks from a public water supply. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4033: Elections—Requires state to reimburse costs for certain special elections. *MTA supports.*

HBs 4207-4208: Broadband equipment—Exempts eligible broadband equipment from personal property taxes. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4210: Elections—Provides for the electronic return of absent voter ballots by military voters and their spouses. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4360: Local government—Allows emergency services authorities to serve partial municipalities. *MTA supports.*

HBs 4382-4383: Drain Code—Revises Chapter 22 of Drain Code process through determination sufficiency of petition and proposed boundaries. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4428: Public notices—Revises publication of legal notices and creates the Local Government Public Notice Act. *MTA supports.*

HBs 4479-4480: Statewide sanitary code—Provides for the assessment and regulations of on-site wastewater treatment systems. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 4502-4503: Election challengers—Provides requirements and training requirements for election challengers. *MTA supports.*

HBs 4526-4528: Local preemption—Preempts local authority for regulations for sand and gravel mining operations. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4548: Notaries public—Provides fee for remote notarization. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4566: Vehicle registration—Allocates revenue from vehicle registration fees to county where registrant resides and distributes per lane mile to local road agency. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4572: Property tax assessments—Exempts transfer of ownership of certain real property to certain individuals from uncapping of taxable value upon transfer. *MTA monitoring.*

HBs 4605-4606: Public safety—Creates the public safety and violence prevention fund and provides for the earmark and distribution of 1.5% of the 4% of sales tax revenue into the fund for disbursement. *MTA supports.*

HB 4675: Land bank authorities—Provides exemption for land bank authority property from all state and local taxes, fees and special assessments unless contracting for services. *MTA neutral.*

HB 4688: Collective bargaining—Requires minimum staffing levels within a bargaining unit to be a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4693: Open Meetings Act—Allows nonelected and noncompensated public bodies to meet remotely. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4708: Property taxes—Exempts qualified electric vehicle charging stations from property taxes levied after Dec. 31, 2023. *MTA opposes.*

HB 4860: Charter townships—Amends conflict of interest policy for charter township officials. *MTA supports.*

HB 4866: Annexation—Exempts certain charter townships from annexation. *MTA supports.*

HB 4965: Franchise fees—Modifies definition of video service. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5028: Homeowners association—Invalidates energy-saving home improvements prohibition by homeowners association. *MTA neutral.*

HBs 5039-5041: Local preemption—Prohibits local governments from enacting or enforcing an ordinance, policy, resolution or rule that regulates a dog based upon breed or perceived breed. *MTA opposes.*

HBs 5133-5134: Property taxes—Provides property tax exemption for certain senior citizens and replaces with a specific tax. *MTA opposes.*

HB 5353: Unfunded mandates—Provides for state financing of activities or services required of local units of government. *MTA supports.*

HB 5392: Trial court funding—Extends sunset provision on imposing costs related to costs incurred by trial courts for court operations from May 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2026. *MTA supports.*

HB 5438: Short-term rental—Creates the short-term rental regulation act that retains local zoning authority, imposes an excise tax to be distributed to municipalities and creates a statewide registry. *MTA supports.*

HB 5534: Trial court funding—Requires State Court Administrative Office to analyze certain trial court costs and revenue sources and develop legislative proposals by May 1, 2026, to change trial court funding. *MTA supports.*

HB 5550: Elections—Extends time period by which an elections board must determine a recall petition to be factual and of sufficient clarity from 20 days to 40 days. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5551: Elections—Modifies eligibility requirements for members of board of state canvassers and boards of county canvassers. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 5557: Housing—Requires local government master plans to forecast and take into account housing needs. *MTA monitoring.*



Mika Meyers invites you and your colleagues to our Hospitality Reception at the 2024 MTA Educational Conference.

Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be provided. We hope to see you there!

DATE

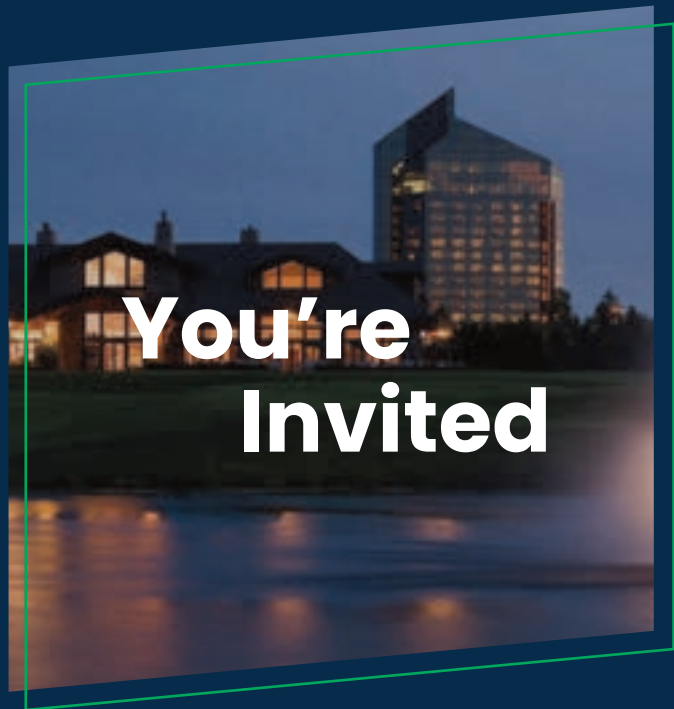
Tuesday April 23, 2024

TIME

4:00pm-8:00pm

LOCATION

Grand Traverse Resort
100 Grand Traverse Village, Suite 1259
Acme, Michigan



mikameyers.com





Stay connected with federal updates—sign up for NATaT e-newsletters

As MTA members, township officials, board/commission members and employees are also members of our national organization, the National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT). Along with advocating on behalf of our nation's towns and townships, NATaT has number regular e-newsletters providing guidance and updates useful for Michigan townships. You can sign up to receive these resources directly in your inbox! Stay up to date with NATaT's:

- **Weekly Legislative Report**, a weekly update bringing officials details on federal happenings in Washington, D.C.
- **The NATaT Interconnect**, a bimonthly update of federal actions related to broadband, cyber and tech innovation.
- **Infrastructure Funding Bulletin**, biweekly information and resources on federal infrastructure funding opportunities and news..
- **Weekly Grants Update**, with timely information on grants for local governments, from The Ferguson Group, which oversees NATaT.

Find sign-up links on the "NATaT Weekly Legislative Update" webpage on <https://michigantownships.org> (click on "Advocacy Resources" under the "Member" tab. Login is required.).



Do your residents need recycling info?

FREE Design, Printing & Postage*

Signup at recyclingpartnership.org/mi-egle
*for communities with less than 30,000 population



BS&A Cloud ERP

- Rapid, Hassle-free updates
- Software as a Service
- Accessibility
- Scalability
- Security, Compliance, and Disaster Recovery
- Storage Resilience and Access
- Unparalleled Support and 100% Implementation Success



(855) BSA-SOFT | www.bsasoftware.com



One Team



**What's in store for you at MTA's
Educational Conference & Expo?**

**April 22-25, 2024
Grand Traverse Resort,
Acme Township**

See pages 18-26
to learn more!

2024 MTA Conference at-a-glance

Monday, April 22

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Assessors Renewal: March Madness*
Includes continental breakfast
(Approved by the State Tax Commission for four hours of assessors elective credit)

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Defining Your Township's Land Use Future*
Includes continental breakfast & lunch
(Qualifies for six foundation credits in MTA's Township Governance Academy) 

8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Understanding Assessing Basics*
Includes continental breakfast & lunch
(Approved by the STC to meet assessing support staff training requirement)

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Show Me the Money: A Township Board Primer on Raising, Spending and Reporting Township Money*
Includes continental breakfast & lunch

9:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Legal Institute for Township Attorneys*
Includes continental breakfast & lunch

11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

MTA Registration Center, Ticket Xchange & Friends of MTA (PAC) booth open
Ticket Xchange sponsored by Great Lakes Recreation; novelty ribbons sponsored by Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.

5 to 6 p.m.

MTA Volunteer Training Reception
(by invitation only; RSVP required)
Sponsored by Miller Canfield

8 to 11:30 p.m.

"3-D" Welcome Reception at McGee's 72
Sponsored by Bendzinski & Company, Municipal Finance Advisors


**Separate registration fee required to attend.*

Tuesday, April 23

7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

MTA Registration & Ticket Xchange open
Ticket Xchange sponsored by Great Lakes Recreation; novelty ribbons sponsored by Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.

9 to 10:15 a.m.

Opening Session 
Sponsored by DTE Energy; One Team gear sponsored by Soch, Inc.; large screens sponsored by Foster Swift; coffee sponsored by Michigan CLASS

10:15 a.m. to 1 p.m.


MTA Expo, Bookstore & Friends of MTA (PAC) booth open
Portrait studio sponsored by Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Township Business Solutions Sessions 


- Getting Your Community 'Cleaned Up'
- Hot Legal Topics for Townships
- Improving Law Enforcement Transparency and Accountability with Accreditation
- Oh No, You Don't—You Can't Fire Me!
- The Benefits and Burdens of Using Special Assessments for Improvement Projects
- Township Trivia Showdown
- What's Next for Renewable Energy?

11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

TGA Graduate "Class of 2024" Luncheon 
(by invitation only; RSVP required)
Sponsored by ITC Holdings Corp.

1 to 2:15 p.m.

Concurrent Educational Sessions

- Blight Fight: Going Another Round 
- "Coins in the Couch": Revenue Sources
- Geez! I Wish I Hadn't Said That! 
- Insights from Inside the Capitol
- Our Facilities Need Help! Where Do We Start?
- Rebuilding Broken Trust
- Roadmap to Rural Prosperity
- Roads & Relationships
- Short-term Rental Programs: Do They Really Work?
- Staying Out of Trouble: Keep Your Meetings in Compliance
- Substance Use Policies for Your Township

2:45 to 4 p.m.

Concurrent Educational Sessions

- BS&A Best Practices and Efficiencies
- Crisis Communication & Message Management 
- Dig into Brownfield Redevelopment
- Enforcement and the Right to Farm Act: Myths and Misconceptions
- Go With the Flow: Water Resources and Your Township
- Human Trafficking: Not in My Township
- Information Overload
- Managing Public Meetings and Policies 
- Planning for a Millage Question
- Public Safety Priorities
- Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

4 to 6 p.m.

NEW! Evening in the Expo Reception
Open to all attendees!

4:15 to 4:45 p.m.

MTA Districts 11 and 20 Caucus Elections

7 to 10 p.m.

Par-Plan Fun Night Township Olympics
Sponsored by Michigan Township Participating Plan

Wednesday, April 24

7 to 11 a.m.

MTA Registration Center & Ticket Xchange open
Ticket Xchange sponsored by Great Lakes Recreation; novelty ribbons sponsored by Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.

7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Rise & Shine Breakfast *Free to all attendees!*
Sponsored by Consumers Energy

8:30 to 9:45 a.m.



General Session, featuring keynote address by Paul Epstein 
Sponsored in part by Consumers Energy; large screens sponsored by Foster Swift; coffee sponsored by Michigan CLASS

9:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

MTA Expo, Bookstore & Friends of MTA (PAC) booth open
Caricatures sponsored by Vortex Aquatic Structures Intl.

10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Plenary Educational Sessions

- Elections Update 
- One Team: Applying the Playbook Pillars
- Renewable Energy Update 
Sponsored by Stantec Consulting, Inc.



1 to 2:15 p.m.
Concurrent Educational Sessions

- Asset Management: The Science of Managing Roads
- Building a Successful Township Team
- Campaign Finance Act: What Can We Say? 📶
- Guns on Runs: Should Fire & EMS Personnel Carry Weapons While on Duty?
- In the Weeds
- Lawful Borrowing Options
- Navigating the Digital Minefield
- Ransomware, Phishing and Hacktivists—Your Township *is* at Risk!
- What Changes Are Proposed for the MTA Policy Platform
- What the Board Needs to Know about the Clerk and Treasurer Dynamic 📶
- What Your Township Needs to Know about MIOSHA Inspections

2:45 to 4 p.m.
Concurrent Educational Sessions

- Can They FOIA That?
- Civil & Collaborative Leadership: 📶
Creating High-Functioning Teams
- Community Connection LIVE
- Community Matters:
Creating a Citizens Academy
- Data-driven Strategic Planning & Budget Creation
- Rising Stream of Support for Water Infrastructure
- Subpoenas, Depositions and Discovery, Oh My! 📶
- Tax Collection Best Practices
- They Posted What?!
- Traffic Safety and Your Township

6:30 to 9 p.m.

MTA Banquet

Entertainment sponsored in part by Acrisure; caricatures sponsored by Vortex Aquatic Structures Intl.; large screens sponsored by Foster Swift

9 to 11 p.m.

Afterglow Reception
Sponsored by Acrisure

Thursday, April 25

9 to 11 a.m.

MTA Annual Meeting 📶
Large screens sponsored by Foster Swift

Still time to register!

When we ask our members why they look forward to attending our Annual Educational Conference & Expo, there are three words that they tell us, again and again: **education**, **inspiration** and **connection**.



For more than 70 years, the MTA Annual Conference has been the largest gathering of local leaders in the state, offering an educational line-up geared exclusively to townships, Michigan's biggest municipal exhibition, and an opportunity to connect with your township peers. Join us in April at Grand Traverse Resort in Acme Township (near Traverse City) for a township experience like no other. There is still time to attend; on-site registration is available. Learn more at <https://michigantownships.org/conference>.

Attending in-person but want access to even more education? Add the Conference On-Demand option for only \$50 when you register for the Conference.

We look forward to seeing you there!

**Can't join us in Grand Traverse?
Check out our Conference On-Demand**

Can't make it to the Conference in person? Our Conference On-Demand is an excellent option—and an incredible value. You'll have access to recordings of the main stage events and 10 educational sessions following the event. You still get the education and inspiration—when it works best for you. Wondering what classes are included? Look for the 📶 next to session names. Purchase your Conference On-Demand access for \$150 at <https://michigantownships.org/conference>.



Conference On-Demand assistance provided by



One Team

The power of ‘green light decisions’ in your township and beyond

One team. Powerful words. Powerful potential. Powerful purpose. Powerful impact. And none of it is possible without green light decisions and actions.

I learned about the power of green lights as a 15-year NFL and NBA executive, and am now on a mission to inspire green light communities, boardrooms, classrooms, locker rooms—and beyond.

Here’s a sample of what green lights can lead to:

- Community impact
- Health and wellbeing
- Success and significance
- Team performance
- Purposeful lives
- Happiness and fulfillment
- Clarity and peace
- Belonging and mattering
- Trusting relationships
- Conviction in actions
- Confident decisions



Paul Epstein is passionate about team transformation—and has a playbook for team leadership. We asked MTA’s 2024 Conference keynoter to share his thoughts on how township teams—no matter how many players you have—can work together to explore best practices and “next practices” to build trust, empathy and belonging among all of your teammates and your community. Learn more from Epstein at the Conference’s General Session,

at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24, and his plenary session, One Team: Applying the Pillars Playbook, being held later that day, from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. More about the Conference appears on pages 17–26, and on <https://michigantownships.org/conference>.

I’ve coached these green light transformations with world-changing philanthropists, Olympians, Fortune 100 CEOs, Shark Tank entrepreneurs, Navy SEALs and community champions. And township leaders are next.

Leading a green light life

As the General Session keynote speaker on April 24 at MTA’s 2024 Annual Conference & Expo, I will unveil insights around how to lead a green light life and how to inspire green light communities by driving green light impact. Consider this a taste—the full unveiling will happen during my keynote, which I’m humbled and honored to share, so we can dive even deeper into this green light game plan **together**.

Today is about green lights—but know that equally important is the awareness required to not run reds, and to conquer and navigate the messy middle of yellow.

So let’s dive into what this green, yellow, red formula is all about. It all boils down to the decisions we make and actions we take. If you think of your life and honestly audit the decisions made or not made, the actions taken or not taken, there is typically a massive correlation to the quality of your life.

- Job—stay or go
- Relationship—in or out
- Health—committed or not
- Time—spend on x or y
- Finance—invest or pass
- Team—hire or fire

The compounding effect of making these decisions well leads to a great quality of life. The opposite is also true. On the back end of every decision is an action. Mastery of one can lead to mastery of the other; they're inextricably linked.

Life is a game of decisions and actions. *"Show me the quality of your decisions (and actions), I'll show you the quality of your life."* The same is true for me. You. Your family. Your friends. Your community. Your peers. Your township. Every single one of us. Of course, we all want the highest quality of life possible, so what's getting in the way? Apparently, it's the silent killer of INDECISION. The worst possible decision we can make ... is indecision.

Research states that 85% of people suffer from indecision daily. Paralysis, doubt, stress, anxiety, feeling stuck, worried what other people will think, fear of a negative outcome. All of these are the usual suspects that lead to indecision.

To highlight the magnitude that decisions have in our life, the average adult makes 35,000 decisions in a day! That's a lot—and it's also a massive opportunity, because when we own our decisions, we'll own our life. If decisions have such high stakes, we might as well make them better, and faster.

This is what led to me writing my latest book, *Better Decisions Faster*, where I introduced the world to this green-yellow-red process to make decisions with clarity, peace of mind and unshakable confidence. So let's dive in!

The 'Head-Heart-Hands Equation'

Welcome to the "Head-Heart-Hands Equation." Head is your mindset, heart is your authenticity, and hands are your actions. The equation is: **Head + Heart = Hands**

When deciding whether to use your hands (action or no action), there are two checkpoints—head (*do I THINK it's a good idea?*) and heart (*do I FEEL it's a good idea?*).

To know what your next move should be, process the equation through a traffic signal. Just like when you're driving, you know exactly what to do. Green is GO. Red is STOP. Yellow is ASSESS.

That's how the Head + Heart = Hands Equation works.
Head AND Heart both on board = GREEN LIGHT
Head OR Heart on board = YELLOW LIGHT
Neither Head NOR Heart on board = RED LIGHT

Think of a decision you're currently facing or being challenged with. What is that decision? Is your head on board? Is your heart on board? Both on board = green. One on board = yellow. Neither on board = red. Where did you land? Green, yellow or red?

It's that simple. It informs your next step, within seconds. It's designed to give you clarity, peace of mind, and confidence to know you're making the best possible decision and taking the best possible action in the current moment. It may not always get you to the finish line, but it informs your next step through a simple (and memorable) green-yellow-red process.

It's proven, it's straightforward and its potential (when used consistently) is transformational. The best part is ... it's TEACHABLE and scalable ... in our communities and beyond. This is where ONE TEAM comes in.

A green light community

Imagine a team and a community where we were all green lights. Head and heart fully on board. What would be possible? A community of green light service, green light leaders, green light hope, green light ideas, green light innovation, green light resources, green light opportunity, green light growth, and green light impact. These are the possibilities of a green light tomorrow.

Equally as critical, imagine a community where we now have the awareness to no longer run reds, where we finally have a playbook to navigate and conquer the messy middle of yellow. (*Hint: Most hard decisions lie in the yellow.*) We'll fully unpack yellows in my keynote address.

If we want to build toward green, it will take mastery to process and lead through all three colors. That is how we will become one team. It will take all of us pouring our cups into others. We can't pour ourselves into others if our cup isn't full. Who fills your cup? They are your biggest green lights.

In this moment, I want you to think of your biggest green light—whether living or in memory. That person you would do anything for. Who is your green light?

For me, it's my dad ... my hero. A hero whom I lost at 19 years old. He was a community servant, as we all are. By trade, my dad taught at a continuation high school. After teaching in traditional schools for decades, he chose to teach at continuations because he felt he could create more impact in these environments. Kids who had been given up on, dreams expired, and the hope and prayer is they don't go on to become statistics on the street. It was on these streets that my life changed, forever.

I was walking in the same neighborhood that my dad taught at and a few of his former students came up to me. One said, "Your dad was the first person to ever believe in me." Then, the words I'll never forget: the other said, "Your dad gave me a reason to think that tomorrow is worth it."

I didn't know there are people around us every day who don't feel that tomorrow is worth it. Hearing these words touched my heart, and my soul. I now understood the real power of leadership—and how personal it gets. I now understood the power of impact, and what's possible when you make a difference, and leave people and places better than you found them.

Ever since my dad's former students opened their hearts, I've had a new lens on life. I made the decision to dedicate the rest of my life to impact. The spirit of my hero is what drives me to write books and get on stages, knowing that every day is an opportunity to better a life. In my hero's case and in our communities, maybe even save a life. This is why my dad is my hero, and he is my biggest green light. Who is yours?

Let's dedicate this year and our time together in April to our biggest green light—because we'll never let them down. You make your green light proud, and you'll make your community proud.

Cheers to the impact and green lights ahead. I'll see you at MTA 2024!

Paul

2024-2025 MTA proposed legislative policy platform

As adopted by delegates at MTA's Annual Meeting, to be held April 25, at the Grand Traverse Resort, these proposed policies will become the platform from which legislation is sought in the coming year.

Purpose

The Michigan Townships Association Policy Platform is a member-adopted plan that identifies the Association's primary legislative policy objectives. It provides broad policy guidance to the MTA Board of Directors and staff in responding to legislation in a manner that reflects the values and preferences of the MTA membership. It offers instruction as to the issues that the membership desires the Association to bring to the attention of policymakers and for which the Association is to effectively advocate. The Policy Platform also identifies positions on issues that the Association's membership pledges its active support, including engaging in grassroots advocacy consistent with the Policy Platform objectives.

The legislative process requires compromise and accommodations to alternative perspectives. As such, the Association will pursue legislative outcomes that most closely achieve the spirit and intent of the Policy Platform, but cannot be bound to premise its position on the precise wordage of its Policy Platform.

The Policy Platform delineates issues into six broad issue areas:

- Assessment and Taxation
- Elections
- Environment and Land Use
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Township Operations
- Transportation and Infrastructure

The issues addressed in a particular subject area may have implications for issues addressed in other subject areas and should be interpreted such that the broad policy objectives of all affected areas are accomplished.

MTA Annual Meeting Deliberation and Adoption Process

Member officials are strongly encouraged to review the Policy Platform prior to the MTA Annual Meeting and, if they have questions regarding the purpose or intent of any of the specific policy objectives, to attend the *What Changes are Proposed for the MTA Policy Platform* session on Wednesday, April 24 from 1 to 2:15 p.m. in Michigan Rooms E&F (Level 1).

The MTA president will present the Policy Platform at the Annual Meeting, focusing discussion and deliberation on the policy objectives in each of the six policy areas. Following discussion, debate and potential amendments, a vote will be taken to adopt a resolution of support for the entire Policy Platform. Amendments may include striking (removing) a policy objective. If a policy objective is removed from the Policy Platform at the Annual Meeting, it will be construed by the MTA Board of Directors that it is the membership's intent that MTA refrain from engaging in any advocacy regarding that particular objective.

Amendments. Members who desire to amend a policy will be required to do so in a manner consistent with *Robert's Rules of Order (RONR, current edition)*. Amendments are permitted to any policy submitted at the Annual Meeting provided the purpose of the original policy remains unaltered. (MTA Bylaws, Article IV. C.3)

Amendments can take one of three forms:

- **Add content.** This is accomplished by the following: "I move to amend the proposed policy by adding the words '_____' to the policy objective beginning with the words '_____' in the section under current consideration." The president will ask for a second, which is required for the amendment to be discussed, and will restate the policy objective with the new wording. After restating the amendment, the president will ask for debate on the amendment. One secondary amendment, on the new language under consideration only, is in order. Once debate has finished, the president will ask for a vote. If a majority of the membership votes in favor of the amendment, the wording of the original policy objective is changed accordingly.
- **Substitute content.** This is accomplished by the following: "I move to amend the proposed policy by substituting the words '_____' for the words '_____', to the policy objective beginning with the words '_____' in the section under current consideration." The same procedures that apply to adding content apply to substituting content.
- **Strike content, including eliminating an entire policy objective.** This is accomplished by the following: "I move to amend the proposed policy by striking the words '_____' to the policy objective beginning with the words '_____' in the section under current consideration." If the intent is to strike the policy objective entirely, the proper amendment would be, "I move to amend the proposed policy by striking the policy objective beginning with the words '_____' in the section under current consideration." The same procedures that apply to adding and substituting content apply to striking content. If an entire policy objective is struck (removed), the Association will not advocate for that objective.

Added and substitute content must be in compliance with the MTA Bylaws, Article IV. C.1 and 2, such that it is germane to the purpose of the original policy and does not constitute a new purpose to the policy.

Robert's Rules of Order Regarding 'Tabling' a Motion (properly referred to as 'Lay on the Table')

The motion to "lay on the table" enables the Annual Meeting to lay the pending question aside temporarily, when something else of immediate urgency has arisen. It is in order if the intention is to resume deliberations after the urgent issue has been resolved, but "... is out of order if the evident intent is to kill or avoid dealing with a measure." (*Ibid*) It can be applied to a main motion, such as the adoption of the entire Policy Platform, but cannot be applied to a specific policy objective of the Policy Platform. (*Ibid*) A motion to table must be seconded and is not debatable. If adopted, a motion to take from the table would be in order at any time. (*Ibid*)

Policies from the Floor. Pursuant to the MTA Bylaws, Article IV. C.2.a-c, policies from the floor shall be submitted to the MTA Headquarters Room not later than 12:00 noon the day prior to the Annual Meeting. The Legislative Policy Platform Committee shall review the wording and legality of such policies. No policy shall be accepted from the floor unless a petition signed by at least one hundred (100) registered delegates to the Conference accompanies the policy. The policy sponsor shall furnish sufficient copies of the policy to be distributed to all delegates at the beginning of the Annual Meeting.

Special Rules. The Board of Directors submits to the Annual Meeting the following special rules, pursuant to *Robert's Rules of Order (RONR, current edition)*:

- There is a time limit of three minutes per delegate on debatable issues the first time that a delegate addresses the Annual Meeting membership on an issue, and one-and-a-half minutes the second time that a delegate addresses the Annual Meeting on the same issue.
- The chair shall have discretion in further limiting the time of debate considering the overall limitation of time.

Vision Statement

The Michigan Townships Association envisions local governance where:

- Townships have statutory authority and state financial support sufficient to provide fiscal stability, high-quality services and infrastructure consistent with community needs and expectations, and to enable full compliance with ever-expanding state-imposed mandates without cutting local spending priorities
- Elections are accurate, secure, fair and a high percentage of registered voters participate
- Local control is respected and valued by state lawmakers as townships work to solve local and regional challenges through visionary, ethical leadership and collaboration
- Natural resources are utilized in a manner consistent with township regulations that ensure long-term sustainability and leverage value as public assets
- There is clarity of roles and responsibilities for township officials essential for efficient and effective services to the public

- Townships retain authority to protect and regulate the public rights-of-way and other land uses in the interest of the public
- State laws recognize that township officials are elected by and accountable to their residents for the township's governance, financial position, programs and services consistent with community values

Assessment and Taxation

The Michigan Townships Association supports property tax fairness, equity, and efficient assessment and collection by public servants who are accountable to township officials to ensure public trust and locally accessible information and assistance. Valuation should be based on sound assessing principles. Local governments should be reimbursed by the state for property tax revenues lost due to statutory exemptions. Townships must be fiscally positioned to ensure economically resilient communities.

As lawmakers and regulators enact changes to current tax laws and local government requirements, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Require the valuation of big box stores to be determined using the same assessing methodology as other commercial properties and prohibit the consideration of private deed restrictions or covenants imposed to reduce the value of the property or exclude competitors of the grantor from the market
- Support the state assuming administration and funding of disabled veterans' property tax exemption
- Oppose expansion of property tax exemptions without replacement of local revenue
- Limit property tax exemption eligibility for nonprofit charitable purposes
- Allow townships to create special assessment districts for infrastructure needs such as high-speed internet and the replacement of privately owned sewer leads
- Raise the current charter township 10 mill tax limitation to allow charter townships, with voter approval, to address legacy costs, meet demands for expanding services and offset millage rollback requirements
- Recodify Michigan township statutes to include clarification that assessors are accountable to the township board when the supervisor is not certified to perform assessing functions
- Increase the specific tax on mobile homes located in licensed parks and levy on park owner rather than individual occupied dwelling owners
- Exempt minimal personal property tax obligations resulting from minor property improvements on mobile home lots such as small decks, stairs and porches
- Allow option for a local excise tax for the purpose of providing public recreational facilities and/or public safety expenses related to increased tourism

proposed legislative policy platform

Elections

The Michigan Townships Association supports fair, transparent, efficient and secure elections administered by township officials that encourage high voter participation and procedures appropriate to varying community resources and population densities.

As lawmakers and regulators enact changes to current election laws, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Preserve the authority of townships to convey information on ballot proposals to their residents
- Preserve the authority of townships to place millage and bond proposals before voters at any election
- Permit the option for nonpartisan township offices to be approved by the township board and the electors
- Establish state fund for the statewide replacement of voting equipment
- Require continued funding for the operations of state election requirements
- Require election challenger training

Environment and Land Use

The Michigan Townships Association supports state laws that enable townships to efficiently and effectively plan for land uses and adopt zoning ordinances to protect the public health, safety and general welfare. State and federal regulations should not impede local government growth and development policies and objectives. Local authority over land use decisions must be protected. The Michigan Townships Association will work to minimize preemption of local decision making and retain local authority as an essential part of land use decisions.

As lawmakers and regulatory agencies enact changes to laws addressing township land use and environment, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Ensure any statewide sanitary code requirements adopted reduce septic system failures that create serious public health threats and that expose townships to liability for expensive public sewer systems
- Preserve landfill capacities by directing appropriate materials to waste utilization facilities and support an increase in the state tipping fee to a rate competitive with nearby states while preserving a local tipping fee option
- Preserve local authority on zoning issues that are local in nature to ensure protection of public health and safety and property values
- Increase state funding and support for environmental programs to address issues such as brownfield redevelopment, contamination and invasive species
- Ensure that any heightened review of environmental permits for communities overly impacted by environmental degradation protects public health and allows for local development goals to be met in a timely manner

- Ensure that the state retains the United States Environmental Protection Agency-delegated authority to issue wetlands and other water permits
- Ensure that the definition of Waters of the United States, subject to permitting processes of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers, is not extended to non-navigable waters such as roadside ditches and culvert installation and maintenance

Intergovernmental Relations

The Michigan Townships Association supports township officials having the discretion to resolve policy issues that are manifestly local in nature. MTA also supports state laws that encourage intergovernmental collaboration to restore economic prosperity, efficiently and effectively deliver programs and services, and solve other challenges. State laws should allow creativity, flexibility and incentivize fair and equitable cost-sharing benefits and governance in interlocal agreements. State laws authorizing economic development tools and other powers should be based on community characteristics relative to policy objectives. State taxation and spending policies should mitigate adverse revenue impacts on townships.

As lawmakers and regulatory agencies consider altering the fiscal relationship of the state to local governments as well as powers and authorities of local governments, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Ensure state laws allow township officials to solve local issues in a manner consistent with local values, priorities and needs rather than impose a one-size-fits-all approach
- Guarantee full funding to townships for payments in lieu of taxes for state-purchased lands, commercial forest lands and swamp tax/tax-reverted properties
- Expand the number of townships eligible for statutory revenue sharing and grants
- Ensure a local government consolidation process continues to require voter approval

Township Operations

The Michigan Townships Association supports state and federal governments granting to Michigan townships broad discretion and autonomy to govern the funding and delivery of programs and services. MTA also supports state reimbursement to townships for increased costs resulting from new mandated services and state regulations.

The Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Clarify and strengthen the governance role of township boards to establish policy direction and manage operations for their community
- Enact appropriate, cost-effective training requirements for township planning commissioners and zoning board of appeal members to reduce costly lawsuits and improve township decision-making by key appointed boards
- Allow township supervisors the authority to perform marriages

- Permit members of a public body to participate in a public meeting remotely
- Allow public notice requirements to be met by posting the required notice on the website of the public body

Transportation and Infrastructure

The Michigan Townships Association concludes that Michigan's transportation system will continue to require more funding than is currently anticipated in law to ensure that county primary and local roads are safe and convenient for travel. As townships are major financial contributors to infrastructure needs, the Michigan Townships Association supports planning, funding and delivering infrastructure needed for every community to be economically viable and to protect the health, safety and general welfare of residents. The Michigan Townships Association supports a strong partnership between local, state and federal officials to establish long-term reliable funding necessary to create and maintain infrastructure and improvements.

As lawmakers and regulators address pressures to better address Michigan's infrastructure, the Michigan Townships Association supports the following objectives:

- Modernize and increase funding above current statutory levels for primary and local roads, and increase state funding for water, sewer and communications infrastructure
- Allow for a county road agency in conjunction with a requesting township to lower the speed to a level deemed necessary for motorist or pedestrian safety on a gravel or unimproved surface road

- Encourage state and county road funding agencies to provide funds for township road construction and utilize allocated funds for maintenance projects
- Ensure that any move to alternatives to the gas tax to help fund transportation infrastructure incorporates the practicalities for rural communities
- Expand engineering and safety data to include pedestrian-vehicle impact data and multiple modes of transportation to properly manage speed limits

Bylaw Amendment

The MTA Board of Directors has adopted the following amendment to the MTA bylaws. Pursuant to Article XI of the MTA bylaws, bylaw amendments may be made by the Board of Directors subject to the right of the voting membership at the next Annual Meeting to reject the same by a majority vote of the membership present and voting on the same. This notice is given pursuant to MTA Bylaw Article XI, that provides that the Board shall give written notice to each township official member of any such bylaw amendment not less than 10 days prior to the next following Annual Meeting of the Association.

CAUCUS RULE 1.

e. Who is Entitled to Vote. Each township BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBER official member within the District shall be entitled to one vote in person. No proxy may be used at any District caucus meeting.

ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDER MTA **CiviClarity**
MUNICIPAL WEBSITE SERVICE

INNOVATING BASED ON CLIENT INPUT

Cemetery Plot Finder & Available Plots

Staff Directory

Expiring RFPs

What do you wish your website did?

248-684-8715 help@civicclarity.com CivicClarity.com

63

Michigan communities have a 22-person planning department.

You can, too.

"They're always available to provide advice on most planning or zoning issues and their advice is based on 35 years of experience in numerous communities throughout Michigan."

R. Brent Savidant, planning director, City of Troy

Carlisle | Wortman
ASSOCIATES, INC.

CWAPLAN.COM 734.662.2200 **ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDER MTA**

2024

Conference Sponsors

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Rehmann

Bronze



Plenary Session Sponsor



Exhibitor List

Visit these exhibitors at the MTA Expo, April 23 & 24, held in conjunction with the MTA Annual Educational Conference.

- 123NET
- AccuNet Website Services
- ACD.net
- Acrisure
- Allpaid
- American Legal Publishing LLC
- Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick, Inc.
- Andrews Hooper Pavlik PLC
- Archangel Safety Training LLC
- Autmow of Western Michigan
- Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors
- Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC
- Black Rock Technologies
- BS&A Software, Inc.
- C2AE
- Carlisle Wortman Associates
- CIMS Cemetery Software
- Citizens for Local Choice
- Consumers Energy
- DLZ Michigan, Inc.
- DTE Energy
- Emergency Vehicles Plus
- Empower Retirement
- Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC
- Fleis & Vandenbrink Engineering, Inc.
- Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC
- Friends of MTA
- Gordian
- Gosling Czubak Engineering Sciences, Inc.
- Gourdie Fraser, Inc.
- Great Lakes Furniture Supply, Inc.
- Great Lakes Recreation
- Great Lakes Segway
- Hartleb Agency,
An EMC Insurance Company
- Highline
- Hi-Tech System Service, Inc.
- Holland Engineering, Inc.
- Humana
- ITC Holdings Corp.
- IVSComm, Inc.
- Journey Construction Group
- KCI, Inc.
- LegalShield
- Mannor Group
- McGraw Morris PC
- McKenna
- MCSA Group, Inc.
- MERS of Michigan
- Michigan Chloride Sales
- Michigan CLASS
- Michigan Dept. of Environment,
Great Lakes & Energy
- Michigan Dept. of Agriculture
& Rural Development—Right to Farm
- Michigan Municipal Executives
Michigan Municipal Risk
Management Authority
- Michigan State Industries
- Michigan Township Participating Plan
- Midstates Recreation
- Miller Canfield
- Nelson Granite
- Partners In Architecture, PLC
- Plante Moran Realpoint
- Point & Pay
- Polly Products
- Porous Pave, Inc.
- Printing Systems, Inc.
- Priority Waste
- Property Cleanout Michigan, LLC
- Rose Pest Solutions
- Scenic Michigan
- Shumaker Technology Group
- Sinclair Recreation
- Soch, Inc.
- Spalding, DeDecker & Associates
- Spectrum Enterprise
- Spectrum Printers, Inc.
- Spicer Group, Inc.
- Stantec Consulting, Inc.
- Stonehugger
- The Mannik & Smith Group
- TMR & Associates
- TriMedia Environmental & Engineering
- USDA Rural Development
- USG Water Solutions
- VC3
- Vector Tech Group
- Vortex Aquatic Structures
- Wade Trim, Inc.
- Webuildfun
- Wightman
- Williams & Works
- WM

Allied Service Providers are indicated in blue.



Effective audit management: A guide for townships

The township board is required under MCL 141.425 to have an annual audit of the financial status of the township. For townships with a population less than 4,000, the audit may be performed every two years. Townships, as with all government entities, are accountable to the public for their actions and decisions. They face various financial, operational and reputational risks, as well as legal and compliance requirements. Audits provide an independent and objective assessment of the township’s financial statements, ensuring that public funds are used efficiently and effectively. Additionally, regular audits can help identify risks and promote transparency between townships and their residents.

However, the audit process can be daunting, especially with all the documentation and steps required. Here are some ways to ensure a smooth audit for your township:

Establishing a reasonable timeline

The first step in effectively completing an audit is establishing a reasonable timeline. This involves understanding the scope of the audit and estimating the time required for each task. Rushed processes can lead to oversights and errors, compromising the integrity of the audit. The timeline should be realistic, taking into account the audit’s complexity and the resources available. It should also include buffer time for unforeseen delays.

It can be challenging for audit firms to move the dates of an audit, so if there could be an issue with being ready for the audit, communicate this well ahead of time with your auditor.

Frequent communication with the auditor

Frequent communication with the auditor is crucial. Regular updates and discussions can help clarify expectations, address concerns and prevent misunderstandings. It’s important to establish a clear line of communication from the outset, with designated points of contact on both sides.

Understanding what the auditor wants

Understanding what the auditor wants is key to a successful audit. Familiarizing oneself with the auditor-provided assistance list is essential to accumulating and providing the correct documentation in the format most easily used by the auditor. For example, providing the trial balance in PDF format is likely not helpful as most audit software requires information to be in Excel.

Don’t assume that having a couple of items outstanding at the start of the audit won’t hold up your auditors. Often, one small piece of information can have a domino effect on the audit process. If there are any concerns or ambiguities, clarify these with the auditor early on to prevent potential issues down the line and ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Setting internal milestones

Setting internal milestones is a useful strategy for managing the audit process. These milestones, which should align with the overall audit timeline, can help track progress and ensure that tasks are completed on time. Regularly reviewing these milestones can help identify delays or issues early, allowing for timely corrective action. The goal should be to be 100% ready before the first day of audit fieldwork.

Setting yourself up for success

Conducting an audit is not about evading scrutiny but rather about embracing the opportunity to demonstrate accountability and improve operations. Townships can navigate the audit process effectively and confidently by establishing a reasonable timeline, maintaining open communication, understanding the audit requirements, and setting internal milestones. Embrace it as a tool for improvement, rather than a test to be feared.

Information provided in *Financial Forum* should not be considered legal advice, and readers are encouraged to contact their township auditor and/or attorney for advice specific to their situation.



Tips to ‘lighten the load’ for township clerks

Who can do what ... for clerk and election duties

The office of township clerk has always been an important one, with a wide variety of statutory duties, not the least of which is administering elections for the township.

The variety of duties—and often exaggerated expectations—for the office of clerk have long meant that the clerk was expected to be capable in multiple areas, including even those that are not statutory duties of the office.

For many clerks, it was rewarding work and, because they viewed it as a public service, they accepted salaries that would not have competed with pay for the same levels of responsibility in the private sector. Many clerks have been “super clerks”—getting it all done simply because the rest of the board took it for granted. But that is no longer the case.

While the statutory duties of the office of clerk—including recordkeeping, accounting and financial reporting—have expanded over the years with new laws and requirements that impact even the smallest townships, the recent changes in different aspects of Election Law have radically changed the office of clerk in a way not experienced before.

With generational changes, clerks have been retiring in greater numbers. And many more are simply leaving because they cannot continue with the ever-increasing levels of

responsibility at lower pay than private sector jobs or which interfere with personal responsibilities. Experienced clerks are leaving township office in unprecedented numbers, and new clerks may not want to take on everything that the former clerk did (or put up with), especially things that are not duties of the office of clerk.

In reality, no one wakes up in the morning and automatically knows how to be a township board member, let alone how to be a township clerk. Nothing about township government is intuitive—it is all directed by what the law says townships and township officials must or may do. Even having similar experience in a private sector position, like accounting, is helpful, but still not a full understanding of what governmental fund accounting involves or the role of the clerk in it.

Most people who come to township office have skills or expertise in some areas, but not in others. An individual who is interested in being elected or appointed to the office of clerk might be great at drafting minutes and keeping records





but cannot handle numbers—or vice versa. Or a person might agree to help by being appointed to fill a clerk vacancy (nothing can be paid if there is no clerk and no deputy clerk), but has no interest in doing specific clerk functions beyond serving in the clerk's board member capacity.

There is no point trying to ram a square peg into a round hole; ultimately the whole township board is responsible for seeing that the statutory duties of all of the offices get done properly for the township, regardless of the board members' skills or lack of.

This article, and the MTA fact sheet on which it is based, is intended to help a township board understand some options for helping current and new clerks—and the township itself—succeed by working with what resources the township can provide for a person willing to hold the clerk's office, including having others do different aspects of the statutory duties of the office of clerk, as well as balancing expectations for the clerk to do “additional, non-statutory duties.”

What does 'statutory duty' mean?

Note: The following information applies to all townships, regardless of general law or charter township status, and includes all offices with statutory duties, including a superintendent/manager in a charter township. We are focusing on the office of clerk, and specifically the non-election and election duties of the clerk that could be performed by someone other than the clerk or deputy clerk, if authorized by the board. The statutory duties discussed here are used as common examples.

The main duty of a township board member is to serve on the township board. But state statutes also assign various administrative (non-policy-making) duties to three of the four township board offices.

The word “duty” is not used lightly. MCL 750.478 provides that any public officer who willfully neglects to perform a statutory duty, “where no special provision shall have been made for the punishment of such delinquency,” is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year or a fine of not more than \$1,000. And at least one court opinion has stated that a township board cannot unduly restrict a board member from performing their statutory duties.

But even a quick look at the statutory duties of the office of clerk (*see page 30*) should give anyone pause to consider whether he or she knows what those duties involve or has experience to perform them.

While township accounting might historically have involved recording a few checks and bank deposits a month, today it commonly involves hundreds of transactions, year-to-date tracking with state-mandated chart of account numbers, and electronic federal payroll reporting and withholding procedures that incur rolling fines if not done properly. And that's only one aspect of day-to-day administration and management for townships in the modern world.

When a township board office has a statutory duty to perform an administrative function for a township, the officeholder does not “own” the duty—you “owe” the duty to see that the function is performed properly for the township.

Many board members focus their attention and skills on performing the administrative duties of their office. Other board members choose to emphasize their role as local legislator and policymaker at board meetings, relying on deputies and employees to handle administrative duties. And those are personal decisions that board officeholders may make, working with the township board, with considerations of the staff and resources the township has to function.

At the very least, the officeholder has a responsibility to see that the duties of his or her office get done, and that may include working with the board to have the job done by others, including the official's deputy, other township staff or outsourcing, under the officeholder's oversight. Depending on the statute that assigns the duty, there may be limitations on who may perform it. For example, mandated financial internal controls would prevent the treasurer from performing the clerk's accounting functions. And only the clerk/deputy clerk or treasurer/deputy treasurer can sign for their respective positions on checks or other payments.

Whether an official is overwhelmed by a complicated function or the volume of responsibilities that come particularly with being the clerk—or is refusing to do the

cover story



The recent changes in different aspects of Election Law have radically changed the office of clerk in a way not experienced before.

function properly or at all—there may be times when a township board may need to step in and provide other options for performing that function, after consulting with its legal counsel, liability insurance carrier, auditor or applicable state agency for specific guidance on what a board may or may not do depending on the seriousness of the situation.

Ultimately, the township is responsible for its affairs and functions, and the township board has the fiduciary responsibility to see that the township meets its legal obligations, complies with laws and regulations, and avoids waste.

Statutory duties of office of clerk

Many of the statutory duties of the office of clerk may instead be done by someone other than the clerk. And many things that people think are statutory duties of the clerk are not really and could be done by others—or the clerk could receive “additional, non-statutory duty” compensation (outside of the salary resolution, but still by payroll) for doing them. See sidebar article at right for what is—and isn’t—the clerk’s statutory duties, and turn to page 10 for more on additional non-statutory duties for township board members.

‘Lighten the load’ on clerks

Spread the non-election clerk duties

“Someone else” can perform many functions of the clerk’s department
This concept applies to any of the three board offices that have statutory administrative duties—supervisor, clerk and treasurer. In many townships, a person holding the office of supervisor, clerk or treasurer prefers to concentrate on his or her legislative board duties and take a department head approach to having staff to perform the day-to-day

administrative functions. Other supervisors, clerks or treasurers prefer to take a hands-on approach on their administrative duties. Ultimately, the township board must balance the available skills and resources of both board members and staff, with the real-life challenges of costs and compliance for their regulated functions.

Regarding the clerk’s duties, for example, the accounting, payables and especially payroll functions are very complicated and time-sensitive, and have the potential to subject the township to fines and penalties for non-compliance. The clerk has the responsibility to see that these administrative functions are performed, but the board still has the overall responsibility and liability for the township’s funds and financial obligations.

For example, it may be an option for a township board to use “someone else” (someone other than the clerk), such as other township officials or employees, or a third-party company to handle certain clerk statutory duties, such as accounting, payables and payroll processing (although neither the treasurer nor deputy treasurer can be the person preparing the checks because of the segregation of financial duties required by the Michigan Department of Treasury). The clerk could perform the duties of the office by overseeing other staff or the outsourcing of the accounting, payable and payroll administration function to a third-party company.

Note that the clerk would still sign the checks/payments. That duty can only be performed by the clerk or deputy clerk. And only the treasurer or deputy treasurer can sign any payments for the “treasurer’s side.”

It’s important to note that arranging to have someone other than the clerk perform the payables or payroll functions is not to say that a township board can simply reduce the salary of the office of clerk as a result. The person who holds the office of clerk would have to agree in writing to reduce the salary of the office for that to happen unless the salary of the office is reduced effective with the start of a new township term.

A board member who is reluctant to allow someone else to perform a statutory duty of their office is often concerned about losing their salary. Because the salary of a board office cannot be reduced during the term of office without the official’s written agreement, the officeholder will still be entitled to the salary of the office, whether they actually perform the duties of the office or allow someone else to perform them.

It can be expensive, because the board is likely also paying the “someone else” to perform those duties, but it is one way to at least minimize mounting penalties from late payroll reporting or reduce the stress on a very busy or overwhelmed elected official, for example.

There are still some statutory duties that **cannot** be performed by anyone other than the clerk and his or her deputy, such as check-signing.

Statutory duties of the clerk

Township board member

- Same legislative and administrative responsibilities as all other board members, including duty to participate and vote (*the clerk is not simply the “secretary” to the board*)
- Responsible for the drafting and maintenance of township board meeting minutes
- Notifies township board members of special township board meetings
- Responsible for township board meeting notices

Records

- Maintains custody of all township records not assigned by law to another board office
- Keeps the township “oath book” (*oath slips must be filed with clerk*)
- Responsible for maintenance of township “ordinance book” (*ordinances, including the zoning ordinance, must be filed with clerk*)
- Receives and delivers tax certificates (often L-4029) of taxing entities to supervisor for summer and winter tax bills

Accounting

- Accounts for all township funds
- Monthly reconciles general ledger against treasurer’s banking ledger, receipts and deposits (*required by Michigan Treasury Accounting Procedures Manual; in a charter township, MCL 42.29 requires supervisor or superintendent to do*)
- Prepares financial reports for the township board:
 - ✓ At least monthly balance sheet by fund (*best practice per Michigan Treasury Accounting Procedures Manual*)
 - ✓ At least monthly check report
 - ✓ At least quarterly revenue and expenditure report (*required per Michigan Treasury Accounting Procedures Manual*)
- Provides information to assist in development of budget, at least for clerk’s area of responsibility (“*clerk’s department,*” “*elections department*”)

Payroll and payables

- Initiates and signs all payments leaving township (except for current year tax collection disbursement account). ONLY clerk or deputy clerk can sign payments (*checks/electronic*) for the “clerk’s side.” ONLY treasurer or deputy treasurer can sign payments for the “treasurer’s side.” Someone else can do preparation of payments.
- Unless records are assigned by law to another office, the clerk would maintain or oversee maintenance of personnel, payroll and payables records. (*In a charter township, the supervisor or superintendent would do, depending on how township board has defined “personnel director” duties under MCL 42.10(n).*)

Elections

- Township “department head” for elections (*budgeting and preparation for equipment, software, training, internal staffing, etc.*)
- Chairs the township election commission, which appoints election inspectors and conducts specific other pre-election functions
- Voter registration (*done year ‘round, including specific hours during 14 days prior to an election, early voting days, and Election Day*)
- Qualified Voter File maintenance and updating
- Candidate and local proposal petition filings
- Publishing and posting election notices
- Absent voter process—list, applications and ballots
- Military and overseas voters
- Ballot proofing
- Preparation and programming of election equipment (*electronic pollbook; working with election commission on equipment for preliminary and public accuracy tabulation tests*)
- Election Day issues (*including early voting days*)
- Closing the polls/precinct canvass

NOT statutory duties of the clerk

(*clerk could agree to do as additional, non-statutory duty*)

- Serving as Freedom of Information Act coordinator
- Drafting all resolutions, ordinances or policies for board (*usually those functions require legal drafting or at a minimum at least review by township attorney*)
- Holding specific non-election related “office hours”
- Being office manager or other township “job description”
- Serving as “recording secretary,” drafting minutes or handling notice for other township boards and commissions, such as the board of review, planning commission or zoning board of appeals
- Employee personnel/human resources functions
- Handling billing functions
- Serving as cemetery sexton/manager, including selling plots, scheduling grave openings, maintenance—per individual township’s job description/expectations
- Working as an election inspector (*ONLY if, as chairperson of election commission, appointing self under emergency situation prior to Election Day (MCL 168.674(5)). Note that the township election commission cannot assign “additional duties”—only the township board may (MCL 15.183(4)(c)), but board has no authority to appoint election inspectors.*)

cover story



The main duty of a township board member is to serve on the township board. But state statutes also assign various administrative (non-policymaking) duties to the supervisor, clerk and treasurer.

Emergency situations

Note that MCL 41.58 does provide that: “If, because of disabilities, the incumbent in a township office and the incumbent’s deputy are **unable to perform** the duties of their offices, the township board may make a temporary appointment of a suitable person to discharge the duties of the incumbent’s office. The person so appointed shall take the oath of office or give bond as required by law and shall continue to discharge such duties until the office is filled by election or permanent appointment or until the disability of the incumbent or the incumbent’s deputy is removed.” (*emphasis added*) MTA understands that to include the check-signing duties of the clerk or treasurer, depending on the office involved.

But also note that “disabilities” do not include simply being unavailable (Attorney General Opinion 3629 of 1945-46) or having resigned (the clerk is then no longer holding office as the “incumbent”). Instead, think of the unfortunate situation in which a clerk and deputy clerk might both have been injured in a car accident and literally unable to perform, for example. So this is different from the “someone else” approach.

Spread the election duties

Even in “normal” times, a clerk can take a “department head” approach to election duties, if the clerk and the township board can agree to it. The township board’s approval would be needed to provide appropriate staff, such as a deputy clerk authorized to be more than a “substitute-only” deputy, or to provide one or more election assistants (with legal authority to do clerk election duties, not simply clerical office staff). In this way, they could work alongside or instead of the clerk to perform some or most of the election administration duties of the clerk.

Note that the terms “**election assistant**” and “**elections clerk**” are not generic job titles for anyone helping out in the clerk’s department. They are specific titles provided in the Election Law for specific situations. And there is no statutory position of “election specialist” at the local level—it is our understanding that this may be a generic job title reflecting commonly accepted job-naming practices.

Clerk election accreditation training

Clerk initial training

All new clerks must complete the Election Officials’ Training Accreditation within six months of the date of an election to be able to administer the election. (MCL 168.31) According to the state Bureau of Elections (BOE), “This course is not required before conducting an election for the first time but should be completed as able to do so.”

Clerks who are already certified only need to meet the mandatory continuing education requirements (*see below*).

While it was previously required to be taken in-person only, the Online Election Officials’ Training Accreditation has been created by the BOE to fulfill the requirements under the Election Law for the clerk to receive initial accreditation. A clerk must also pass the online accreditation exam and receive a certificate of accreditation certification. The BOE one-day in-person course replaces the two-day course and will be offered only on a very limited basis.

While clerks are required by MCL 168.31 and 168.33 to receive initial accreditation and take continuing education, the BOE encourages all deputies and election administrators (including “election assistants”) to also complete the curriculum.

Clerk continuing education

Each township clerk is also required to complete the BOE continuing election training at least once every two years to maintain accreditation as a clerk. This training is provided by the BOE to clerks at no charge to the clerk or township. (MCL 168.33)

After a clerk receives their initial accreditation, any additional materials in the BOE eLearning Center that they complete will count toward the clerk’s requirement for continuing education.

Training ‘someone else’ to do election duties

At the current time, per the BOE, the only individuals who are required to complete the accreditation training are clerks. While clerks are **required** by MCL 168.31 and 168.33 to receive initial accreditation and take continuing education, the BOE **encourages** all deputies and election assistants to complete the accreditation curriculum as well.

Per the BOE, an election assistant will only need to complete the “QVF Basic User” curriculum for initial access to QVF. If they need complete QVF access, they will also need to complete the full “QVF Basic to Complete” training. There are no other required trainings in the BOE’s eLearning Center at this time for election assistants.

Deputy clerk

While every township clerk has a deputy clerk with the same statutory authority as the clerk, except for voting or sitting on the township board, without any additional authorization by the township board, the deputy clerk acts only as a substitute in the absence, death, disability or recall of the clerk. For a deputy clerk to act alongside the clerk, the township board would have to specifically authorize that deputy clerk to do so—and that can vary depending on the hours or pay authorized.

Training: If a deputy clerk is expected by the board and the clerk to assist the clerk in performing all or most of the clerk’s election duties, it is strongly recommended that the deputy clerk should also have the same BOE Election Official’s Training and Accreditation as the clerk.

Election assistants

The Election Law provides that a clerk may appoint a number of election assistants as may be necessary to carry out the general provisions of the Election Law. If doing so, the clerk must consider an application for the appointment of an election assistant without regard to age, socioeconomic status, sex, race, national origin, religion, political affiliation or any disability the applicant may have.

An election assistant must take the oath of office, which must be filed in the township clerk’s office, and must be properly instructed by the township clerk in the duties the assistant is assigned to perform (see below).

A township clerk has no authority to unilaterally “hire” township employees. An election assistant may receive compensation only if authorized, and at the level authorized, by the township board. (MCL 168.29)

Election assistants appointed under MCL 168.29 possess only the authority “to carry out the general provisions of the election law” assigned to them by the clerk. There is no case law on what those provisions include, with only Attorney General Opinion 6972 of 1998 specifically stating that election assistants could be appointed to assist a clerk “in taking voter registrations.”

It is clear that an election assistant cannot do any NON-election clerk duties and is not an “additional” deputy clerk. An election assistant cannot substitute for the clerk at a township board meeting or to provide a signature where the clerk’s signature is required (on checks or contracts, for example).

Clerk election administration functions that likely could be done by a deputy clerk or an election assistant, include (and possibly are not limited to):

- Voter registration
- Qualified Voter File maintenance and updating
- Candidate and local proposal petition filings
- Publishing and posting election notices
- Absent voter process—list, applications and ballots
- Military and overseas voters
- Ballot proofing
- Preparation and programming of election equipment
- Election Day issues (including early voting days)
- Closing the polls/precinct canvass

Training: While it is only required for the clerk, the BOE encourages all deputy clerks and election assistants to complete the accreditation curriculum as well.

Note that an election assistant will only need to complete the “QVF Basic User” curriculum for initial access to QVF. If they need complete QVF access, they will also need to complete the full “QVF Basic to Complete” training. There are no other required trainings in the BOE’s eLearning Center at this time for election assistants.

Elections clerk

Again, this is actually a very specific title for a very specific situation—not a generic job description for anyone in the “clerk’s department.”

MCL 168.373 states: **“If neither the township clerk NOR any [read “the deputy”—township clerk can only have one at a time] deputy township clerk shall be available to perform** any necessary functions in connection with registrations, nominations or elections during the usual or required times for performing such functions, **the township board shall appoint some qualified person who is a registered elector of the township to perform such functions until such time as the clerk or a deputy resume their duties.** Any such person so appointed shall have all of the powers and authority of a deputy appointed by the clerk pertaining to registrations, nominations and elections.” (emphasis added)

Training: Because this section of the law anticipates that neither the clerk or deputy clerk are available to perform the election duties—and the elections clerk does so “until such time as the clerk or deputy resume their duties”—this would typically be a situation in which both the clerk and deputy clerk are unable to perform (illness, injury, unavoidable absence, etc.—speak to township’s attorney for specific guidance on when this option is appropriate). And, because an elections clerk “has all powers and authority of a deputy clerk pertaining to registrations, nominations and elections,” it is strongly recommended that an elections clerk should also have the same BOE Election Official’s Training and Accreditation as the clerk, or at a minimum, any BOE training required or recommended to perform specific functions, such as that needed for working in the QVF.



ENGINEERING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

800.482.2864
www.wadetrim.com

ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDER MTA

WAIDE TRIM

cover story

Election inspectors

Election inspectors do not have authority outside of the polling places on early voting days or Election Day. And they do not have election functions on other days. When working as an election inspector, they do not register voters.

But, as people who are trained and experienced in working elections, they may be considered to also serve as “election assistants” at other times or as an “election clerk” if it becomes necessary (per MCL 168.373, see page 33) to perform some or all of the township clerk’s statutory election administration duties.

Training: Note that Election Inspector Training is not the training needed for the clerk. If an election inspector is going to be an “election assistant” or “election clerk,” they must have the same training requirements recommended or needed for those positions.

Township clerk election compensation

MTA supports townships paying township clerks an appropriate salary of the office for their very important duties, especially election functions.

And we recognize that the greatly expanded election functions due to recent extensive amendments to the Election Law in a short period of time, as well as increasing numbers of elections being scheduled, even in what would normally have been considered in the past to be “off years,” means that all townships should review their lawful options for appropriate clerk’s compensation.

Clerk election pay or reimbursement rules depend on the office held

There are major differences between the laws that govern counties, cities, villages and townships—particularly regarding what a township board member can be paid and how that is set, as compared to the other units where, for example, a city or village clerk might not be elected/appointed, but is actually an employee, subject to entirely different laws regarding pay.

In a township, the salary of the office of clerk *as stated in the salary resolution for the office of clerk*, is the **ONLY** compensation that a township clerk can receive *for performing the statutory duties of the office of clerk*. A township clerk cannot be paid extra, separate compensation for any statutory duty of the office of clerk.

Administering elections is one of the primary statutory duties of a clerk. A township clerk *is compensated* for anything to do with the clerk’s statutory duty of election administration through *the salary of the office of clerk*. So, a township clerk cannot be paid additionally, over and above the salary of the office, for administering an election (but the salary can be increased following the correct legal steps for the individual township). There is no extra payment to the clerk per election or election reimbursement.

If a clerk serves as an election inspector for an election (under limited circumstances per MCL 168.674(5)), then

they would be an “election inspector” for those hours they serve on Election Day, and they would be paid what the township pays its election inspectors—**BUT** they cannot receive any other additional pay for their *clerk’s statutory election duties*.

So, regardless of how many elections or early voting/ registration days a township clerk might have in a given year, *the salary of the office stated in the salary resolution is the most that can be paid to a township clerk for holding the office of clerk and performing the statutory duties of the office*.

For this reason, MTA encourages townships to consider increasing the salary of the office of clerk to account for the recently increased voter registration and early voting duties of township clerks, if at all possible.

See the MTA’s “Compensation for Township Officials” webpage for more direction on the method your individual township can use to increase the salary of a township board office (access via the “Answer Center” under the “Member” tab on <https://michigantownships.org>; login is required).

Supporting township clerks

Without a doubt, the role of townships and elected officials is constantly changing and evolving. With recent statute and constitutional changes, township clerks have certainly borne the brunt of these dramatic shifts. Township boards can take actions and efforts to support their clerks—and the essential role they play in our townships, for residents and in helping safeguarding democracy in our state.

Information for this article is from MTA’s newest Resource Toolkit, “Who Can Do What ... For Clerk and Election Duties: Tips to ‘Lighten the Load’ for Township Clerks,” developed by MTA’s Member Information Services Department (MIS). Download the toolkit from <https://michigantownships.org>, and find more clerk, elections and compensation information in our online “Answer Center” (access under the “Member” tab on <https://michigantownships.org>; login is required). Questions? Contact our MIS staff at (517) 321-6467 (press 1).



Election costs that are reimbursed to a township

Townships exist to conduct elections—it is one of the main three mandated functions that townships receive their general funding for (assessing, tax collecting and elections). So, the cost of elections is a “cost of doing business” for a township.

A township will be reimbursed for certain costs of conducting a few specific types of elections (NOT all elections), as directed by law. Note that the different reimbursement payments are restricted in how they can be used.

Because those costs cannot include “extra” payments to a township clerk (compared to a city or village clerk—who are normally employees and paid under different laws from township clerks), it is very important for a township board to carefully consider setting the township clerk’s salary of the office at an appropriate level to pay for not only all the other statutory duties of the clerk’s office, but especially the significant time, training, knowledge and responsibilities required of the clerk to provide election administration in service to your township, county and the state.

May any reimbursed election cost payments be paid directly to the township clerk or other staff?

No, none of the statutory reimbursement payments for election costs can be paid directly to a township clerk or other township election personnel.

May any statutory reimbursement payments for election costs be used as revenue sources for the already established township clerk salary or the pay for a deputy clerk or election assistants or election clerks?

Probably not. There are, however, some distinctions in the statutes that authorize election reimbursements that vary the answer. But all of the statutes explained below, with the exception of MCL 168.642 regarding village special elections, would fall under the Bureau of Elections *Information on Reimbursement for Costs Related to the Conduct of School Elections* (because MCL 168.487 specifically applies to all but MCL 168.642):

“Examples of Reimbursable Costs

- Costs associated with the production of ballots
- Rental charges for buildings used to establish polling places
- The cost of supplies and postage
- Fees for janitorial services
- The cost of publishing close of registration and election notices
- Travel and transportation expenses associated with the election

- Fees for equipment rentals
- Wages or per diem payments made to canvassers, precinct inspectors and temporary employees
- Election overtime or extra compensation paid to regular employees or officials for handling the school district’s election if it is the jurisdiction’s standard practice to pay overtime or extra compensation to regular employees or officials for handling elections. (Such payments must be authorized as appropriate.) [**MTA: Note that the laws are different for different jurisdictions and “overtime” or “extra compensation” cannot apply to a township clerk because the salary of the office is the only compensation to be paid for statutory duties. A deputy clerk may be paid an hourly wage or salary, but neither the township clerk nor deputy clerk can be paid “overtime”— because they are holding “public office” 24/7/365.*]
- Any other miscellaneous expenses associated with the election

“Examples of Costs Which Are Not Reimbursable

- Compensation paid to regular employees or officials (except as noted above with respect to “overtime” and “additional compensation”). [**MTA: Note that the laws are different for different jurisdictions, and “overtime” or “additional compensation” cannot apply to a township clerk because the salary of the office is the only compensation to be paid for statutory duties. Neither the township clerk nor deputy clerk can be paid “overtime”— because they are holding “public office” 24/7/365.*]
- The cost of new equipment (capital outlay)
- The cost of reusable supplies or equipment”

Several sections of the law authorize reimbursement or payment of costs for an election to townships, including a statewide special election (MCL 168.487), presidential primary (MCL 168.624g), village special election (MCL 168.642), and school or metropolitan district election (MCLs 168.315 and 168.389a). The statutes also specifically mention what reimbursable costs do **NOT** include: “salaries of permanent local officials, the cost of reusable supplies and equipment, or costs attributable to local special elections held in conjunction with” a statewide special election (MCL 168.487) or presidential primary (MCL 168.624g). An apparent exception to the restrictions of MCL 168.487 lies in MCL 168.642, reimbursement for a village special election, which does not require it to be treated in the same way as school election costs.

upcoming MTA workshop

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Zoning Board of Appeals: What's Your Role?

The zoning board of appeals (ZBA) was created as a safety valve, in recognition that the zoning ordinance is not able to anticipate how every property might be affected by zoning. With thousands of individual properties, a single zoning regulation cannot possibly be applied uniformly to every property's unique physical characteristics.

MTA's May workshop, *The ABCs of ZBAs*, will demonstrate how the ZBA serves as a safety valve in those circumstances where zoning requirements don't fit. Explore how variances approved without sufficient justification can turn the safety valve into a leak, and a leak into a flood.

Whether you've been a member of your township's zoning board of appeals (ZBA) for many years or were recently appointed, this afternoon class will assist you in carrying out your responsibilities. Elected officials can learn more about the role of the ZBA and the relationship it has with the board.

Explore the ZBA's authority, duties and roles, including use of alternates and when a conflict of interest might exist. Dig into ZBA review standards, variances, appeals of administrative decisions and interpretations, and hear about other duties that may be assigned to ZBAs. Lunch is included with registration and will begin at noon. The workshop is held from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Dates and locations are:

- May 15:** Treetops Resort Conference Center, Gaylord
- May 22:** Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- May 29:** Four Points by Sheraton, Kalamazoo



Discounted book package available! Use this form to pre-purchase MTA's Planning & Zoning Book Package, which includes *The Township Guide to Planning & Zoning (2019 edition)* and *Planning & Zoning Decision-making (2019 edition)*. The *Township Guide to Planning & Zoning* provides a detailed look at the planning process and outlines elements of a successful planning program, while *Planning & Zoning Decision-making* aims to help planning and zoning officials reach defensible, effective decisions and build a strong community based on sound planning principles and procedures. Books will be distributed at check-in. A limited number of publications will also be available to purchase on-site.



Registration Form

Township _____ County _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Name & Title _____ Purchase P&Z book package? Yes No

Name & Title _____ Purchase P&Z book package? Yes No

Name & Title _____ Purchase P&Z book package? Yes No

Which location will you attend?

- May 15: Gaylord May 29: Kalamazoo
 May 22: Frankenmuth

Early-bird Rate*: \$100/person *Expires three weeks prior to event date*

Regular Rate*: \$125/person *Begins three weeks from event date*

Late Rate*: \$150/person *Applies one week prior to event date*

____ (# registrants) x \$ ____ (rate) = \$ ____

____ (# of books) x (\$77/book*) = \$ ____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED = \$ ____

**Rate applies to MTA members; non-members, call MTA for rates.*

Save time, register online!
www.michigantownships.org

NOTE: Payment must accompany form in order to be processed.
 Check enclosed (payable to MTA) **OR** Charge to: (circle one) MasterCard VISA

Card # _____ CSV (3-digit code) _____ Expires _____

Print Card Holder's Name _____ Signature _____



Send your completed registration form with payment to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI 48908-0078; fax: (517) 321-8908. Or register online at www.bit.ly/twptraining. Need event registration assistance? Call (517) 321-6467, ext. 226. For other event-related questions, call (517) 321-6467, ext. 234.

LEARN TO LEAD

MTA PUBLICATIONS OFFER THE INFORMATION TOWNSHIP LEADERS NEED

Attending our 2024 Annual Conference & Expo? Save up to 20% when you purchase on-site!



Assessing Your Township's Assessing
2022 edition

Member: \$43 Non-member: \$60

Authorities and Responsibilities of Michigan Townships
2020 edition

Member: \$57 Non-member: \$81

Board of Review Guide

Revised 2024

Member: \$44 Non-member: \$61

Building a Better Budget

(Includes Samples) Revised 2008; minor revisions 2013

Member: \$39 Non-member: \$55

Good Press, Bad Press, Depressed

2008 edition

Member: \$24 Non-member: \$33

Introduction to the Freedom of Information Act

Revised 2015 (Includes Samples)

Member: \$31 Non-Member: \$44

Introduction to Fund Accounting

1997 edition

Member: \$50 Non-member: \$70

Introduction to Township Board Meetings

2016 edition, minor revisions 2021

Member: \$18 Non-member: \$24



Managing the Modern Michigan Township

(Includes CD & Update Supplement) Revised 2002

Member: \$40 Non-member: \$56

Officials' Guides to Township Government

Member: \$43 Non-member: \$60

(Supervisor, 2016 minor revisions 2020; Clerk, 2016 minor revisions 2022; Treasurer, 2016 minor revisions 2022; Trustee, 2016 minor revisions 2021)

*MTA members may also purchase an **Officials' Guide Bundle**—which includes all four books, one for each township office—for the **discounted price of \$153**

(no substitutions, please; not applicable for additional discounts).



Municipal Civil Infractions—The Process
2008 edition

Member: \$37 Non-member: \$52

On-Call Fire Departments: The Township Board's Responsibilities
Revised 2005

Member: \$31 Non-member: \$44



Policy Matters! Using Board & Administrative Policies to Manage Your Township

(Includes Samples) 2010 edition; minor revisions 2014

Member: \$42 Non-member: \$60

Special Assessments: A Technical Manual for Townships

2003 edition; minor revisions 2013

Member: \$42 Non-member: \$60

Township Cemetery Management

(Includes Samples) 2018 edition

Member: \$42 Non-member: \$60

The Township Guide to Planning & Zoning

Revised 2019

Member: \$54 Non-member: \$76

Township Planning & Zoning Decision-making

Revised 2019

Member: \$39 Non-member: \$55

Township Basics Kit

Includes the Introduction to Township Board Meetings, Official's Guide to Township Government, and Authorities & Responsibilities of Michigan Townships.

Member: \$105 Non-member: N/A

*Not applicable for additional discounts

Township Essentials Collection

Includes all resources offered in the Basic Starter Kit PLUS Building a Better Budget, Introduction to FOIA, The Township Guide to Planning & Zoning, and Policy Matters!

Member: \$252

Non-member: N/A

*Not applicable for additional discounts



How to Order

Visit our online store at www.michigantownships.org, email tonia@michigantownships.org or call 517.321.6467, ext. 231.

Read publication descriptions and download an order form at <https://michigantownships.org/learning/books>.

Order forms can be faxed to 517.321.8908, or mailed to MTA, P.O. Box 80078, Lansing, MI, 48908-0078.

Michigan state sales tax applies, unless tax exempt. Shipping & handling included.

For additional assistance or questions, contact the MTA Office at 517.321.6467, ext. 231.



Michigan Township Participating Plan

Insurance Solutions for Michigan Townships



Risk Reduction Program

Risk Reduction Grants · HR Compliance Support
Training, Certification & Accreditation Program

248-371-3100

theparplan@tmhcc.com

theparplan.com