


Township Focus

JUNE 2023

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

Meet 2023 MTA President Pauline Bennett

A photograph of Pauline Bennett, the 2023 MTA President, speaking at a podium. She is wearing a bright yellow blazer and has a name tag that says 'MTA'. In the background, a man in a suit is clapping. The scene is lit with warm stage lights.

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corridors of
power
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2023 Conference
keynoter urges
officials to lead with
'silver platter service'
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Township flags
inspire local pride,
sense of history
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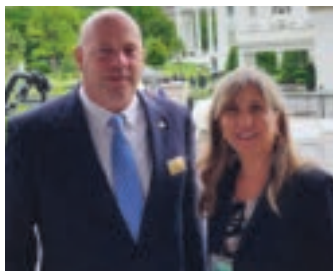
Through the corridors of power

In early May, a delegation of deeply experienced Michigan township leaders traveled to Washington, DC for the annual National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT) America’s Town Meeting and legislative fly-in. This gathering features White House staff, ranking U.S. senators and representatives, and federal agencies providing briefings on important developments and opportunities. Then, delegates have “Hill visits”—brief conversations with their state’s U.S. Senate and House members or staff.

Over my desk at MTA Headquarters, I have a historic photo of the 1994 Michigan delegation at America’s Town Meeting, the largest that ever went. Nearly 200 MTA member officials rode the busses down with then-MTA President **Roger Rycenga** to advocate for our legislative priorities. If you were on that trip or the similarly large ones of the past, I envy you. It must have been thrilling to make such an impact marching through the corridors of power.

The game has changed. Today, our impact is not measured by the number of constituents amassed outside congressional office doors. Our senators and representatives (and their teams) value concise explanations of the bills we support or oppose. They greatly appreciate our use of social media to acknowledge that they are supporting Michigan communities’ and residents’ needs and interests. Social media—likes, tweets and hashtags—help them document their work for us to their followers.

On this trip, 2023 MTA President **Pauline Bennett** (pictured with me at right), First Vice President **Connie Cargill**, Executive Committee Member-at-Large **Marvin Radtke, Jr.**, MTA District 13 Director **Glenn Rowley** and I managed nine meetings in one day, where we:



- Asked for votes supporting H.R. 3002 (Rebuilding Rural Roads), H.R. 907 (Protecting Community Television), H.R. 1812 (Reforming Broadband Connectivity), and H.R. 1814 (the Fire Station Act).
- Sought support for Farm Bill measures that change programs from loans to grants, decrease or eliminate local

cost share requirements, boost broadband program authorizations, and help build local capacity to successfully apply to programs.

- Expressed how helpful it would be to see the reintroduction and passage of the Volunteer Driver Tax Appreciation Act, in which the mileage reimbursement rate should be set equal to the prevailing business driver rate.
- Asked that they vote against H.R. 471 (the SHIP IT Act), due to safety and infrastructure damage concerns, and cautioned against future road funding relying heavily on vehicle miles traveled fees or taxes, as this approach is inherently unfair to residents living in open space territories and without access to mass transportation alternatives.



With Michigan Sen. Gary Peters



With U.S. Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI-2nd)

I presently serve as NATaT president and am very grateful to our member townships for your support of our involvement in NATaT. While we have just concluded the successful fly-in, this event was primarily a set of opening dialogues. Your help by building on your existing relationships with both our state and federal representatives and senators—or establishing new ones—is how we can multiply our impact. If you wish further details on the bills I’ve set out here or our federal policy platform, please visit www.natat.org or contact me.

As we move toward our nation’s Independence Day celebrations, I thank you for delivering on the promise of democracy every day.

Neil



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mission statement

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



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featured articles

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Meet 2023 MTA President Pauline Bennett

Long-time **Addison Township** (Oakland Co.) Clerk **Pauline Bennett**, who has served on the MTA Board since 2009, has been elected 2023 MTA president. Learn more about Bennett's commitment to the government closest to the people, and her hopes for MTA and townships over the next year and into the future.

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Township flags inspire local pride, sense of history

Townships can boost community pride through the creation of an official township flag. Get some tips and suggestions for getting started on yours, including how you can engage with residents and students to create a flag that showcases the uniqueness of your community.



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Look back at the 2023 MTA Annual Conference & Expo! Turn to pages 16-25 for complete MTA 2023 coverage, including the adopted legislative policy platform, a keynote address excerpt, photos and more!

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AUDIT UPDATE

Treasury to conduct PRE audits in 2023

The Michigan Department of Treasury is auditing principal residence exemptions (PRE) in 76 counties in 2023. Audit questionnaires have been sent out and will continue to be sent out for the next several months. Denial notices of PREs will be sent to counties, local officials and taxpayers between April and October.

Township assessors and treasurers must use the revised Form 4816, *Request to Bill Seller Following a Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) Denial*. Assessors are also required to submit Form 4660, *Active-Duty Military Affidavit* and are required to keep copies of all PRE forms and timely provide copies to the Department of Treasury upon request. These forms are available at www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission (under the “Forms” drop-down menu). However, assessors are no longer required to submit the following forms, based on Public Acts 121 of 2017 and 141 of 2022: Form 2368: *Principal Residence Exemption Affidavits*; Form 2602: *Requests to Rescind Principal Residence Exemption*; Form 5565: *Principal Residence Exemption Affidavit for Similar Exemptions in Other States*; Form 2742: *Notice of Denial of PRE—Local*; Form 4075: *Notice of Denial of PRE—County*; Form 4640: *Conditional Rescission of a PRE*; and Form 4983: *Foreclosure Entity Conditional Rescission of a PRE*.

For further assistance, contact (517) 335-7487 or email PRE@michigan.gov.

Retirements

Peter Psarouthakis, Sharon Township (Washtenaw Co.) supervisor for 11 years. “Peter has served with true dedication to the township’s residents,” said Trustee **Trudi Cooper**.

John Nash, Spring Lake Township (Ottawa Co.) supervisor for 19 years, helping the township to achieve MTA’s “Township of Excellence” award three times. Said Nash, “For the last 19 years, I have applied all the coaching skills I learned in the public schools: work hard; have realistic goals; get good people on your team; treat those people well; and let them know how much you appreciate all the good things they do.”

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

Resources to help local governments access federal IIJA funding

Townships, on their own or working with other local governments, stakeholders or regional groups, may benefit from the myriad federal and state grant programs available with funds from the U.S. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also called the bipartisan infrastructure act or BIL).

The state of Michigan has created resources and assistance, available by searching on www.michigan.gov, to help local governments navigate these new opportunities, including establishing the Michigan Infrastructure Office (MIO) to ensure the IIJA funding is used efficiently and effectively, and to partner with local officials, federal partners and others. Michigan can expect to receive upwards of \$11 billion through the IIJA over four years, until 2026, including:

- \$7.3 billion to fix roads
- \$563 million for bridge replacement or repairs
- \$1 billion to improve public transportation
- \$1.3 billion to improve water infrastructure
- \$1.7 billion to expand high-speed internet access
- \$110 million to boost the state’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure

Among the local government resources available are:

Grant support: Michigan local governments can get one-on-one technical assistance to help identify and apply for grants. Contact Kate Madigan (Kate@KateMadigan.com), a consultant working with the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, to learn more.

MIO support: The Technical Assistance Center within MIO funds communities to directly contract with consultants through their economic development organizations or metropolitan planning for grant writing, administration and other services.

Community Navigator: A new Community Navigator tool gives access to easy-to-read information on infrastructure act programs. The dashboard highlights key information, such as program overview, eligible program types, and announced and estimated major deadlines. Officials can better understand potential funding opportunities, express interest in specific funding opportunities, and even request state support or collaboration with the help of the survey tool.

Investment Tracker—An Infrastructure Investment Tracker showcases the location and amount awarded to successful applications for federal funding to support infrastructure projects and provides details on how the state is deploying BIL infrastructure funding across the state and throughout communities.

WATCH AND LEARN

Assessing support staff can get required training at upcoming STC online class

As previously noted in the April/May issue of *Township Focus* and other MTA communications, according to the State Tax Commission (STC), under Public Act 660 of 2018, all assessing support staff must complete required training once every two years. MTA has not been authorized by the STC to offer education to satisfy this requirement. However, two upcoming online *2023 STC Updates* trainings allow support staff to meet this requirement.

“Support staff” is anyone on the township staff who is not certified as an assessing officer or technician, but who is involved in the development of the assessment roll, including field work. It also includes any staff who may provide information from the assessment roll to the public. According to the commission, an untrained staff person may, for example, hand a resident a property card. However, if the staff person is expected to answer resident questions, they must receive training. The *2023 STC Updates* training satisfies the uncertified support staff training requirement, and provides instruction on important topics impacting assessment administration and property taxation.

The four-hour trainings are free, and are being held via Zoom from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on **June 16** and **July 14**. Visit www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission and click on “2023 STC Updates Schedule” for registration links.

Note that all certified assessing officers and technicians must also take the *2023 STC Updates* class as part of their continuing education renewal requirements for the renewal cycle ending Oct. 31. The class is available for assessing officers and technicians through the STC’s Continuing Education Portal (<https://coned.mi-stc.org>).

Watch the STC’s website and MTA communications for future *STC Trainings* should they be scheduled later in the year.

In memoriam

Richard Burrus, Genesee Charter Township (Genesee Co.) trustee for 22 years.

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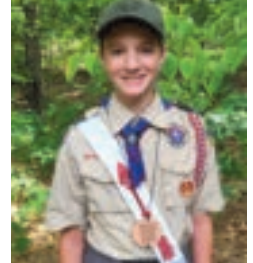
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LOCAL UPDATES FROM ACROSS MICHIGAN

Township happenings

Residents and visitors can check out parks in **Davison** and **Grand Blanc Charter Townships** (Genesee Co.), among others, during the “Explore YOUR Parks Challenge,” which urges residents to enjoy local park systems, participate in a one-of-a-kind geocaching experience, and learn about area history and wildlife.

Cole Sherman, a 13-year-old **Hartwick Township** (Osceola Co.) resident, has been on a mission to clean up land around Big Long Lake where his family vacations and earn his Eagle Scout rank in the Boy Scouts of America. Sherman raised \$900 in supplies when participating in a Hike-a-thon where he walked 58 miles. His fundraising efforts raised more than needed for his clean-up project and he was able to donate \$245 to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Adopt-a-Forest program. A team of volunteer Scouts assisted Sherman in moving more than 70 tires up a steep embankment to the road and cleaning the tires before loading them into a trailer to be hauled to a recycling facility. Once the tires were removed, the team also removed additional trash from the area.



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GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS

New appointments to Michigan Tax Tribunal

Two new members have been appointed by Gov. Whitmer to the Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT), the administrative court that hears tax appeals for all Michigan taxes.

Joshua Wease, a resident of **Meridian Charter Township** (Ingham Co.), is a licensed attorney for the IRS and previously served as a clinical professor of law at Michigan State University and the director of the Alvin L. Storrs Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic. Wease was appointed to represent attorneys for a term that commenced May 1, 2023, and expires June 30, 2023.

Mark Perry, president of Perry & Co., a management consulting firm assisting with real estate transactions, has been appointed to represent members-at-large. Perry's term commenced April 3 and expires June 30, 2023.

Both appointments, which were made to fill roles due to resignations, were subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. Most of the tribunal's appeals involve property tax; however, the tribunal also hears business and individual tax disputes. The tribunal is divided into two divisions: the "Entire Tribunal" and the "Residential Property and Small Claims Division."









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 next episode coming: **June 14 from noon to 1 p.m.**

Who Can Talk to the Township Attorney ... And When



Townships operate in a world of laws. Your relationship with your township attorney is important, but equally important is setting (and communicating) expectations so your entire board understands the process. MTA can help in just one hour! Join us for our next live webinar, where you'll gain insights from MTA legal counsel into best practices for utilizing your township's legal counsel to ensure you are operating lawfully but also in a fiscally responsible manner. Explore issues specific to townships, including typical compensation scenarios, tips for avoiding unnecessary legal risks and more.

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! Visit <https://learn.michigantownships.org/nyk> for details.

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Deater honored for 2022 MTA presidency

2022 MTA President **Bill Deater** was presented with a President's Resolution at the Association's Annual Meeting, held April 20 during MTA's Annual Conference & Expo at the Grand Traverse Resort in **Acme Township** (Grand Traverse Co.). The resolution, presented by 2022 MTA Second Vice President **Connie Cargill**, read in part:



LET IT BE KNOWN that it is an honor for the Michigan Townships Association to acknowledge with admiration, respect and appreciation the leadership of Bill Deater, as his term as 2022 Association president comes to an end.

Deater believes strongly in the power of townships, and township leaders, and committed his year at the helm of the Association to championing the resonance of "One Voice." Throughout his travels to all corners of the state, and while meeting with his federal counterparts and congressional leaders, Deater reminded officials of their profound and impactful ability to effect change when they speak and act together. Deater extolled the powerful force of unity in helping to influence laws and policies impacting townships—to both improve and protect Michigan communities and quality of life in our state.

This commitment to the betterment of community has been at the forefront for Deater throughout his life. A lifelong resident of **Grant Township** (St. Clair Co.), who still lives on the family farm, Deater's service to others embodies the philosophy of "neighbors serving neighbors." He served the township fire department for more than four decades, including as an officer and was named county firefighter of the year. He was urged to seek township office by his wife, Sue, who served as the township's treasurer for more than 20 years. Prior to his election as township supervisor in 2004, he was a member on the township's planning commission, parks and recreation committee and board of review. He has also served on countless county and community organizations and boards over the course of his career. His dedication to community and to townships has helped to better the Michigan Townships Association throughout his service on the MTA Board of Directors and as president.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Michigan Townships Association offers its sincere gratitude to Bill Deater for his tireless efforts to advance the Association's goals and mission during his term as president. May he always be aware of the admiration of those with whom he has served, as well as their sincere wishes for his continued success.

Download *Township Officials Directory* for FREE; access updated information online

Member township officials can download an annual *Michigan Township Officials Directory* for **free** now! This is the perfect tool when looking to contact or network with your fellow township officials—putting names and numbers at your fingertips. The directory



includes a township listing (by county), as well as a separate listing for individual township officials. MTA members and Allied Service Providers can download a free PDF of the directory on the "Find a Township Official" page on the members side of www.michigantownships.org (login is required; look under the "Member" tab).

In addition to downloading from the website, members can also add it to your cart in the online MTA Store on our website to download (there is no charge when "purchasing" from the Store; a hard copy will NOT be mailed). A link to the download appears in your order confirmation. Non-members can purchase the directory on the Store for \$40. The PDF information is current as of February 2023.

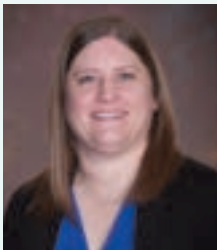
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MTA welcomes new staff, announces promotions

Please join MTA in welcoming two new staff members and congratulating two others on promotions.

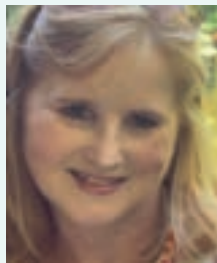
Jill Smith joined MTA as senior accountant in March, bringing more than two decades of experience in the public and private accounting sectors to her new role with the organization. Part of the Administration Department, Smith oversees and maintains the Association finance program and functions, including budgeting, accounts receivable and payable, investments, accounting records and systems, and assisting with the annual audit.



Smith

A graduate of Hope College, Smith is a life-long resident of **DeWitt Charter Township** (Clinton Co.) and has three children. Smith hopes that her work at MTA “helps to make a difference for our members and Michigan communities,” she said, noting that she’s learned a lot about local government in her time at MTA so far.

Katrina Hnath joined MTA as a Knowledge Center aide earlier this year, working with the Education and Communications Departments to help prepare for Association events and Annual Conference, assisting members with accessing virtual education opportunities, fulfilling MTA publication orders, and other administrative functions.



Hnath

Hnath lives in **Meridian Charter Township** (Ingham Co.) with her husband David and dogs, and is the mother of three adult children. She earned degrees from Spring Arbor University, including a master’s degree in Family Studies, and previously held positions in sales support and customer service. “I enjoy working with MTA member officials, and helping to ensure that they get the most from MTA’s education and other resources,” said Hnath, who led member support for our 2023 Virtual Conference.

MTA also announces the promotions of two long-time staff members. Ashley Maher and Kristin Kratky have been named senior partnership development manager and senior event manager, respectively. Maher, who has been with the organization for nearly 12 years, administers MTA’s entire vendor relations program, and assists with marketing and design, and the production of *Township Focus* and MTA publications. Kratky has been with the Association for more than 17 years, and oversees logistical planning and execution of MTA workshops and Annual Conference as well as our Online Learning Center, and assists with event marketing.

profile



Advertorial

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- **Marijuana**—Prepare ordinances for townships that wish to prohibit, limit or regulate marijuana establishments

Foster Swift attorneys are accessible to respond quickly to your township’s legal needs. Visit www.fosterswift.com/services-Municipal-Law.html or contact Mike Homier at (616) 726-2230 or mhomier@fosterswift.com.

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. 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.

mta events | june

6 Cemetery Management and Administration workshop, Jackson

14 Who Can Talk to the Township Attorney ... and When Now You Know lunchtime webinar

20 Cemetery Management and Administration workshop, Gaylord

21 Cemetery Management and Administration workshop, Mt. Pleasant

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Join MTA’s Member Information team!

Do you want to become a member of a highly regarded, dedicated team, and provide a valuable service to townships statewide? Do you have an enthusiasm for researching new information and sharing knowledge? Come join the team in MTA’s Member Information Services Department!

Our MIS staff responds to inquiries from and creates resources for member township officials on township governance and administration. The Association is seeking a new member to join the MIS team. The ideal candidate will possess both township experience and related education, along with excellent writing and communication skills, organization and project management skills, and the ability to conduct analytical research on legislation, law, court cases, trends and services impacting township government.

This is an opportunity to assist thousands of township officials from around the state with critical and timely information they need to help perform their duties. In addition to responding to member officials’ requests for information, the position will also administer MTA’s salary survey and Township of Excellence program, assist in updating and creating content for the Association website, and create and present trainings at MTA events, including county chapter meetings, workshops and our Annual Conference.

If this sounds like you and you want to know more, please visit <https://michigantownships.org/classified/> for the full job description and qualifications and how to apply. We look forward to hearing from you.

JUNE

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

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

Deadline for filing Form 4983, *Foreclosure Entity Conditional Rescission of a PRE* to qualify for the summer tax levy. (MCL 211.77cc(5))

Not later than June 1. Requests are due from a tax increment finance authority, local development financing authority 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; MCLs 125.4312b(2), 125.4411b(2), 125.4213c(2))

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

Deadline for candidates or ballot questions appearing on the May 2 ballot to submit post-election campaign finance statement. (MCL 169.233)

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

9 Deadline for assessors to report 2022 and 2023 taxable values for each

renaissance zone on 2023 *Renaissance Zone Tax Reimbursement Data* (Form 3369). (MCL 125.2692)

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

15 *Not later than June 15.* Requests are due from a brownfield redevelopment authority for state reimbursements of tax increment revenue decreases as a result of the 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 for submission of 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 the State Tax Commission (STC).

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

Deadline for foreclosing governmental units to file petition for tax foreclosure with the circuit court clerk for the March 1, 2023, forfeitures. (MCL 211.78h(1))

By 24 Clerks shall electronically transmit or mail (as requested) an absent voter ballot to each absent uniformed services or overseas voter who applied for an absentee voter ballot 45 days or more before the Aug. 8 election. (MCL 168.759a)

By 29 Absent voter ballots must be available for issuance to voters for the Aug. 8 election. (Mich. Const. Art. 2, Sec. 4)

29 *through July 18.* Precinct inspectors for the Aug. 8 election appointed by township election commissions. (MCL 168.674)

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

Deadline for classification appeals to the STC. (MCL 211.34c(6)) A classification appeal must be filed with the STC in writing on Form 2167 (L-4100), *Property Owner Petition for Change of Property Classification*.

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ANSWER: D

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JULY

1 Taxes due and payable in those jurisdictions authorized to levy a summer tax. (MCL 211.44a(3) and (4))

5 *First Tuesday in July.* Deadline for governmental agencies to exercise the right of refusal for 2023 tax foreclosure proposals. (MCL 211.78m(1))

10 Notice of days and hours of voter registration at the clerk's office for the Aug. 8 election must be published in the newspaper. One notice required. Notice may also be posted in at least two conspicuous places in each precinct and must 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 the Aug. 8 election to issue and receive absent voter ballots. (MCL 168.761b)

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

18 *Tuesday after the third Monday in July.* The July board of review may be convened. (MCL 211.53b) The township board may authorize, by adoption of an ordinance or resolution, an alternative meeting date during the week of the third Monday in July. (MCL 211.53b(9)(b))

Precinct inspectors for the Aug. 8 election must be appointed by this date by the

local election commission. (MCL 168.674)

24 Last day to register by mail or online to be eligible to vote in the Aug. 8 election. (MCL 168.497)

25 *through Aug. 7.* In-person registration with local clerk with proof of residency for the Aug. 8 election. (MCL 168.497)

Candidates not appearing on the Aug. 8 ballot must submit quarterly campaign finance statement by 5 p.m. (MCL 169.233)

28 Candidates or ballot questions appearing on the Aug. 8 ballot to submit pre-election campaign finance statements by 5 p.m. (MCL 169.233)

By 31 Form 170-CFT, *Commercial Facilities Tax Report*; Form 170-CRA, *Commercial Rehabilitation Act Tax Report*; Form 170-OPRA, *Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act Tax Report*; and Form 170-IFT, *Industrial Facilities Tax Report* must be filed with the Property Services Division of the Michigan Department of Treasury on or before July 31 of the tax year involved.



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We tabled a motion a while ago. How do we bring it back up?

That may depend on the form of parliamentary procedure that the board has adopted, but it will also depend on just what the board intended when it tabled the motion.

First, when we talk about parliamentary procedure, most of the rules originated with *Robert's Rules of Order*, which is the “gold standard” of meeting rules and procedure. Note that *Robert's* is not law, and Michigan law regarding townships and public bodies “trumps” *Robert's*, but *Robert's* is still the most commonly used and comprehensive form of procedure used to help board members make decisions efficiently, effectively and fairly.

However, the official version of *Robert's* is almost 700 pages long, most of which deals with large assemblies, not boards or committees like a township board. The downside to using the full version of *Robert's* is that it can be intimidating and complicated to use, especially if you haven't had some training in using it. I personally recommend using some of the “simplified” versions of *Robert's*, such as the official *Robert's Rules of Order in Brief*, or the independent *Robert's Rules in Plain English*, by Doris Zimmerman. They are inexpensive pocketbooks that each board member could have and refer to at meetings. They are short and to the point, with easily understood, real-life examples. When questions arise, flip to that page and get the answer without delay.

Second, the motion to table is probably the most misunderstood—and possibly the most commonly misused—motion. In a nutshell, a motion to table means to temporarily postpone action on the motion. Supposedly, the motion “to table” originated with the English Parliament, where pending matters were filed in colored leather boxes on large tables in the center of the hall. If the king or queen suddenly arrived, the box for the matter at hand was literally put on the table until the monarch left the hall and business resumed. Today, a motion to table is in order (according to *Robert's*) either because the discussion of the motion is being interrupted, by a guest speaker, for example, or because the board needs more information or some other action and it must postpone acting on the motion until a specified time or event. It is improper, however, to use a motion to table to kill the motion.

So, if the board intended that the motion to table would kill the motion being considered, then the motion was improper. I would guess that the board could raise the matter again if a board member makes a motion and gets a second, but that could depend on the actual subject of the motion. If there is any question, the township board should consult with its local legal counsel for specific guidance.

If the board intended to put the matter off to a future meeting, then that is a proper motion to table, but the motion to table should have stated when the matter would come back to the board, like: “Tabled until the September board meeting, when the manager will provide a report of the statistics on how many people use the transfer station,” or “Tabled until the October board meeting, when the supervisor will provide the board with the state's projections for bimonthly revenue sharing,” for example. If done properly, then it will automatically be on the agenda for the stated meeting.



May I ask other board members what they think about a matter coming to the board for a vote?

According to MTA Legal Counsel, the two main cases on this issue are *St. Aubin v Ishpeming City Council*, 197 Mich. App. 100 (1992) and *Booth v U of M Board of Regents*, 444 Mich. 211 (1993). In the *St. Aubin* case, the court held that the Open Meetings Act (OMA) is not violated where a member of a public body conducts an informal telephone poll of the other members to determine how they would vote on a particular issue.

However, in the *Booth* case, telephone calls were made that went “round-the-horn” to find out what all the members of the board of regents were thinking. After gaining input from these “telephone polls,” decisions were made to narrow the list of candidates for president. There were also closed meetings and although no voting took place, the members did reach a “consensus.” The court concluded, in looking at several examples of the procedure that the board of regents used, that the OMA was violated.

The court noted that one of the reasons for the OMA was to prevent public bodies from agreeing privately on an action to be taken and then convening for one or two minutes to formally vote on a “privately arranged agreement.” The court concluded in the *Booth* case that, “even members of the committee acknowledge that its ‘round-the-horn’ decisions and conferences achieved the same effect as if the entire board had met publicly”

The OMA states that “‘Decision’ means a determination, action, vote, or disposition upon a motion, proposal, recommendation, resolution, order, ordinance, bill, or measure on which a vote by members of a public body is required and by which a public body effectuates or formulates public policy.”

The *Booth* court particularly examined whether a decision can be limited to that part of the statute that states “on which a vote by members of a public body is required.” The

university argued that the “polling” was not a vote. The court rejected this argument because, even though technically a decision wasn’t reached through telephone polling, a decision was still made. The court also noted that the statute says, “and by which a public body effectuates or formulates public policy” and did not find any distinction between a committee’s “consensus” and a determination or action as it relates to the definition of “decision.”

According to MTA Legal Counsel, “An individual board member may call and ‘poll’ other individual board members to find out how they individually stand on a particular issue—provided that this does not include any discussion of the issue and does not eliminate later full public discussion and deliberation on an issue. The polling cannot rise to the level of reaching a consensus or an agreement about a certain issue.

“If all the single board member does is ‘poll’ the other members without disclosing to the others what his ‘poll’ has discovered as to the other members’ thoughts, and the discussion and decision-making is later fully made at an open meeting, then it will possibly have met the test pursuant to the *St. Aubin* decision.

“As a result, because there is such a fine line between ‘polling’ and ‘round-the-horn’ telephone calls or discussions, we would be reluctant to advise townships to engage in this type of activity. The temptation to substitute this ‘polling’ for full public deliberations in reaching a decision is too great, which would then constitute a clear violation of the OMA. Furthermore, where several board members engage in ‘polling’ on a given issue, it would be our opinion that a court would consider such polling a ‘round-the-horn’ violation of the OMA.”

Note that these cautions apply to face-to-face conversations, as well as phone calls, emails, texts or other communications.

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 or fax (517) 321-8908.

Learn more with MTA’s *Introduction to Township Board Meetings*

MTA’s *Introduction to Township Board Meetings* explores how township law and the Open Meetings Act make township board meetings different in many ways from other types of meetings most of us have participated in at work, in school, or with other organizations. This book explores some of the most common questions or issues that may arise in scheduling and conducting a township board meeting, and delves into voting procedures, parliamentary procedures and more. To order or download an order form, visit the MTA Store on www.michigantownships.org. You can also call Elsa Munos at (517) 321-6467, ext. 221 or email elsa@michigantownships.org. Cost is \$18 for members; \$24 for nonmembers.



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MOVE ballots to be counted up to six days after election

Legislation allowing an absentee ballot cast by a military or overseas (MOVE) voter to be tabulated if it was postmarked on or before Election Day and received by a township clerk within six days of the election is now law.

Previously, the law required these ballots to be counted if they are received before the close of the polls on Election Day. However, Proposal 22-2 amended the state constitution to grant military and overseas voters the right to have their absentee ballots counted if the ballot was postmarked on or before Election Day and received by the appropriate election

official within six days of Election Day. Public Act 25, sponsored by Sen. Paul Wojno (D-Warren), amended the Michigan Election Law to reflect this change. Specifically, the change provides that if an absentee voter ballot return envelope containing a voted ballot cast by a military or overseas voter was postmarked on or before Election Day and was received in the mail by the appropriate city or township clerk within six days after the election, the clerk would have to consider it timely received. If a city or township clerk receives an absentee ballot return envelope within this deadline but the postmark on the envelope is missing or unclear, the clerk would have to deliver the ballot return envelope to the appropriate county clerk. If the county clerk determines that the voter had dated the envelope or the voter certificate on or before Election Day, the ballot would be considered timely received and would have to be tabulated.

By the seventh day after an election, each city and township clerk would have to forward all timely received ballots cast by military or overseas voters, without opening the return envelope, to the appropriate county clerk for tabulation at a county canvass board meeting. Additionally, the list of instructions included with each ballot provided to a military or overseas absentee voter will now have to include information about the extended deadline and specify that an absentee voter ballot from a military or overseas voter will not be counted if it is received more than six days after an election or is postmarked after Election Day.

The changes took effect on May 1.



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

As members of the Michigan Townships Association, 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 www.michigantownships.org (click on "Advocacy Resources" under the "Member" tab. Login is required.)

Legislative lowdown

A quick look at critical bills MTA is following as they move through the legislative process. For updates, look to our *Township Insights* e-newsletter, emailed weekly to all member officials.

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

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 32 and HB 4176: Law enforcement—Allows agreements requiring reimbursement for law enforcement agencies that fund police training for recruits in certain situations. *MTA monitoring.*

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

SB 41: Construction—Prohibits local units from enacting an ordinance prohibiting the 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.*

SB 55: Property tax—Provides retroactive application of poverty exemption. *MTA monitoring.*

SBs 95-96: 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.*

SBs 124-125 & HBs 4152-4153: Railroads—Creates and provides priorities for local grade separation grant program and fund. *MTA supports.*

SBs 129-131: Brownfield—Expands the definition of “eligible activity” to include “housing development activity.” *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.*

SBs 182-183 and HBs 4274-4275: Revenue sharing—Creates revenue sharing trust fund and provides for distribution of sales tax revenue for the revenue sharing trust fund. *MTA supports.*

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

SB 277: Solar operations—Allows policy for farmers to rent land for commercial solar operations while enrolled in the PA 116 program. *MTA monitoring.*

SB 339 and HB 4594: Elections—Creates absent voter ballot and application tracking system. *MTA monitoring.*

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

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

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

HBs 4129-4130: Elections—Prohibits intimidating an election inspector or preventing an election inspector from performing his or her duties. *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 4230: Labor—Removes prohibition against deduction from a public employee's wages for certain political purpose. *MTA monitoring.*

HB 4238: Natural resources funding—Provides appropriation for Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for FY 2022-2023. *MTA supports.*

HB 4317-4318: Solar PILT—Provides payment in lieu of taxes for certain renewable energy facilities. *MTA neutral.*

HB 4321: Environmental protections—Provides criminal penalties and civil fines for unlawful dumping of garbage. *MTA supports.*

HB 4375: Land banks—Allows certain local units of government to create land banks when located in a county that does not have a county land bank authority. *MTA monitoring.*

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 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 mining of sand and gravel operations. *MTA opposes.*

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

HBs 4553-4554 and SB 331: Local Government reimbursement—Creates local government reimbursement fund, provides for distribution of money to the fund to reimburse local governments for revenue lost due to the increase in the small taxpayer exemption. *MTA supports.*

2023-24 MTA legislative policy platform

As adopted by delegates at MTA's Annual Meeting on April 20 at the Grand Traverse Resort, the following policies are the platform from which legislation is sought in the coming year.

Vision Statement

The Michigan Townships Association envisions a 21st Century Michigan where:

- Townships have statutory authority and state financial support sufficient to provide 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
- Townships are valued and respected for solving local and regional challenges through visionary, ethical leadership and collaboration
- Natural resources are utilized in a manner consistent with township regulations that protect public health and safety and property values
- There is clarity of roles and responsibilities among 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. State government should provide local governments with education and technical support to develop and defend their assessment rolls.

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
- Create reimbursement mechanism to replace lost revenue due to the increase in the small taxpayer exemption
- Support the state assuming administration and funding of disabled veterans' property tax exemption
- Oppose expansion of property tax exemptions without replacement of local revenue
- Narrow 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

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 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 state funding for the implementation of Proposal 2022-2
- Expand the option to allow additional communities to pre-process absentee ballots
- Allow option to increase the active number of registered voters per precinct
- 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 septic system maintenance standards adopted reduce septic system failures that create serious public health threats and 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
- 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, rather than city or township legal status. 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
- Grant 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 road maintenance and construction costs, the Michigan Townships Association supports the inclusion of township officials in transportation policy discussions at all government levels. Michigan has also under-invested in other infrastructure necessary to remain economically competitive and protect the health, safety and general welfare of residents. The Michigan Townships Association supports the State of Michigan working with township officials in planning, funding and delivering infrastructure needed by every community to be economically viable and free of environmental threats and risks.

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

- 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 matching funds for township road construction and maintenance projects
- Ensure that any move to alternatives to the gas tax to help fund transportation infrastructure takes into account 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



'One team for Michigan townships'

Pauline Bennett elected 2023 MTA president

From the moment she attended her first MTA Annual Conference after being elected clerk for **Addison Township** (Oakland Co.), **Pauline Bennett** knew she wanted to be involved in the organization representing Michigan's 1,240 townships.

"When I was first elected, two trustees insisted that I attend my first MTA conference," she recalled. "I was impressed to say the least! That first conference was amazing. I remember saying to myself, I want to be a small part of this organization as it aligns with local control and the wealth of knowledge it gives to the members."

In 2009, she achieved that goal when she was first elected director of MTA District 21, which encompasses Lapeer, Macomb and Oakland Counties. And now, Bennett leads the Association, after being elected 2023 MTA President at our Annual Educational Conference & Expo, held April 17-20 at the Grand Traverse Resort in **Acme Township** (Grand Traverse Co.).

Committed to the government closest to the people

Bennett got her start in township government while operating a family-owned business in the community. Listening to both residents' and elected officials' concerns,

she became more and more involved and was soon appointed to the planning commission. "That appointment ignited me to go further," she said. She was a planning commissioner for three years before being elected clerk in 1996, and remains as committed as ever to the government closest to the people.

"I feel that township government is the best form of government," said Bennett, who became a certified municipal clerk in 2003. "Townships typically have lower taxes, easy access to elected officials and some with relaxed ordinances. Townships govern 96% of the land in the state. Most of all, we represent the residents who put their trust in us to get the job done. We are working with our neighbors."

Elected township officials—and the residents they serve—continue to inspire Bennett. "When I think of township government, I see a group of dedicated elected officials and residents who serve on numerous boards and committees to make their township the best place to live," she said.





Pauline Bennett's first official duty following her election as 2023 MTA president (pictured at right) was to affix the immediate past president pin on 2022 MTA President Bill Deater (pictured at left). Earlier in the week at the MTA Annual Conference, Bennett addressed attendees at the Opening Session (above left) and spoke with officials between sessions (above left).

Officials can build on this dedication to the benefit of all townships by establishing strong working relationships with their state lawmakers, to ensure that the township perspective and input is top of mind when legislators debate new laws impacting townships. “By building a relationship with our state leaders, we offer value to them, with insights as to the effect of proposed laws, what may work for communities, and possible solutions,” said Bennett, who calls retaining local control one of the biggest challenges facing townships.

Taking action to protect townships

A key goal for Bennett as MTA president is, “to motivate MTA members to actively engage in retaining local control,” she said. “Building trust and open communications with your state and federal officials is our opportunity. By taking action, we can tackle both the challenge and the opportunity.”

Local control is a top priority because each Michigan township is unique—a quality that Bennett cherishes. “We are individual townships,” she said. “My township has large parcels, wells and septic systems, wetlands, beautiful lakes, mostly gravel roads (my car is always dirty!) and numerous horse farms. Communities to the south have higher density, water and sewer systems, and paved roads. While southern Michigan communities may favor tree ordinances, in some ‘Up North’ townships, trees are a crop. Is there a right or wrong? No. Does one size fit all? No. Every community has

a story. Let us keep that individuality by maintaining local control.”

Bennett thinks of townships as one team—one team working together to serve their individual community, and collectively as one team working together to strengthen and support the township form of government. “When MTA puts out an action alert that local authority is threatened, even if it’s an issue that’s not in your backyard, contact your lawmaker anyway,” she said. “It is the slow erosion of local authority that we need to stop. Together as one team, we *can* do this.”

Dedicated—and honored to serve

Bennett is proud to lead the organization representing all townships, and brings that passion and years of experience to her role. She has learned from the people with whom—and for whom—she has served, and the many others she has encountered along the way.

“Those who give to others with random act of kindness, or who give of their time to make the world a better place are my heroes,” she said. “My paths in life have prepared me for each new endeavor I pursue. Past experiences and my preference to listen to the members guided me in this direction of MTA leadership. As your 2023 MTA president, I am honored to serve you. I will stand with you.”



‘The world is waiting for you’

2023 Conference keynoter urges officials to lead with ‘silver platter service’

Before he became an award-winning speaker and author, Randy Fox spent more than two decades as an NCAA basketball referee. He’s seen up close what happens when a group of people work together toward a common goal and the greatness they can achieve. Here’s some of what our 2023 Conference keynoter shared on the main stage during our General Session.

Come back with me to a time when you were just five years old. We were excited for the day. We were excited to learn new things. The world was just a fun, amazing place. We loved life. We learned things that were important to our lives. So, let’s journey back, and also remind ourselves of some things that are important today.

It’s about your family, and the MTA family. You have your community and the board on which you serve. You have your residents and your neighbors. Those who you live with and those you “do life” with. And that’s why you do what you do—why you raised your hand up and said, “Pick me, vote for me. Let me go to work for you.”

You did it because you believed you could make a difference. What you do, who you are, right where you are, matters greatly. The world is waiting for you. The world needs hope. The world needs leaders. The world needs a community of people coming together in cooperation, in collaboration, and having communication, having one voice to make a difference ... maybe not always agreeing, but finding that common ground to say that we are going to change the world—for the better.

How do we continue to go down this path that many choose not to do, and they simply want to point fingers at you when they don’t like it? How do we still foster relationships and build trust, ultimately to serve with excellence—what I call “silver platter service”?

Building trust—and building a team for success

When we think about the relationship-building, collaboration, communication and cooperation, and about being effective servants on your board and in your community, it all hinges on one word: trust. People have to know and you have to know that people can trust you and that you can trust others.

Let’s keep building trust in everything that we do.

Every time you interact with another human being, whether you’ve known them for two minutes or 20 years, you’ve taken your relationship and tossed it in the air. It’s up to you to catch them every time. Just because you’ve known someone for decades, if you drop them when they expect to be caught, trust is broken. It’s every moment, it’s every interaction.

We expect people to be successful, but we don’t give them all the tools, resources and information that it takes to be successful. We have to help people win. We’ve got to give them tools to bring unity together and to build something that is amazing. That’s the kind of leader who is worth following—one who sets people up for success.

It’s all about building the trust so people will count on us in the critical moment. How do we bring that team together? How do you stay focused with your team, board, community and family? You’ve got to stay on tempo together, rowing in the same direction at the same time—focused, together.



It's not about you

We never know what people are going through. When that cantankerous person shows up, we think they're attacking us, but they may just be releasing hurt that was caused by something they couldn't even control. We've all had some of those situations in our life.

And it's not about you. It's about what we do with what we have in the moments that we live to put those indelible fingerprints upon people's lives, to change the community forever in the most positive way that we can. Because you were here. Because you came through.

As I learned as a referee, as I learned as a father, as I learned as a corporate leader, I cannot control what other people do. But I can control what I do, how I think, how I speak and how I act. And based on how I respond, maybe, just maybe, we will find one voice coming together. We can still have moments where we find an opportunity to work together so that we can keep going to the future. Victory ... even in the toughest of moments.

We live in a world that says when people make a mistake, point at them and blame them. And when you make a mistake, run and hide and blame someone else. We can't do that. We have to change the world by being different than the world.

You have to be the one who says it's okay that you made a mistake. Let's find a way to overcome this with one voice—not a voice of blame, but of accountability. And one that says to others, "Hey, board members, hey, residents. We may not agree, but we are in our community together. We build one another up and we learn from those experiences so that someday we can go on and fulfill the dream."

'Silver platter service'

Communities don't just change because we have a magic one. It takes you doing the hard work of building relationships, working together, believing in one another, encouraging one another, and becoming one community and one team. And it starts with having a voice.

We listen to one another's voices and we come together. For what purpose? A silver platter service to serve at the highest level that we possibly can. It's not about you—it's about how you can transform others' lives and the community in which you live.

There's a difference between doing your job and doing it with excellence. There's a difference between just checking the box and having a transaction completed, and building and fostering relationships. What's *your* silver platter? Nobody expects the silver platter, and most of the time people don't deserve it. I know you have challenging, frustrating people in your life. Silver platter service is not expected. It's not deserved. But it is always remembered. Some of you are already doing it. Keep doing it. It's worth it because your voice is one voice that can touch people's lives.

The world is waiting

"Doing life" together is the best way to do life. We need one another. We need to learn. We need to celebrate. We need to cheer on. We need to encourage one another. You have a story. I have a story. And we help each other.

What you do matters. Life is hard, but the best part of life is living. Every moment that you have to love others, to come together in one voice, to build and change communities—not be divided, but to be united. To be the kind of people who others will willingly follow so that you can help them navigate and celebrate the beauty of life that is worth living in.

Everything that you do building trust, working hard, silver platter service ... the moment of truth that shows somebody that your heart isn't thinking about you. It's thinking about them.

I don't know where your life is going to go. I don't know you've been, but I know this. You're here today, and every single day that you are blessed to receive, may you seize it. May you see others as an opportunity to make a difference in their life and in the world. Why? For one reason: no matter where you go and no matter what you do, the world is waiting for you.



One Voice

Nearly 2,000 township officials, employees, exhibitors, speakers and guests joined MTA at the **2023 Annual Educational Conference & Expo** to harness the power of speaking with **One Voice**. Together, attendees learned, celebrated and encouraged each others' commitment to their townships and state. Held April 17-20, the annual event included more than 50 educational sessions, a 100-booth Expo, informational—and motivational—general sessions, and even a little bit of fun at networking events throughout the week. Nearly 100 virtual participants who could not be with us in person were able to accumulate a wealth of knowledge from individual sessions and take part in main stage events. Thank you to everyone involved in MTA 2023, and mark your calendar for April 22-25, when we return to the Grand Traverse Resort in **Acme Township** (Grand Traverse Co.) for our 2024 Annual Conference & Expo. We hope to see you there!





Cover story photos by David Trumple, Trumple Photography. See all the photos from our 2023 Conference and download them for FREE at <https://bit.ly/mta2023pics>

cover story

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2023 MTA Executive Committee

Pauline Bennett, President

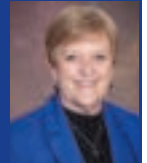
Clerk, Addison Township (Oakland Co.)



"I am honored to serve, and stand with, Michigan's townships as 2023 MTA president. MTA is townships' connection, our advocate and our voice, and is the strongest advocate for townships to maintain local authority to govern their individual communities."

Connie Cargill, First Vice President

Treasurer, Golden Township (Oceana Co.)



"I am truly honored to serve as MTA first vice president. I strive to serve not only Golden Township and MTA's District 11, but all township officials throughout the state."

Harold Koviak, Second Vice President

Supervisor, Burt Township (Cheboygan Co.)



"I enjoy working with all kinds of people, whether it's my local residents as supervisor or officials from my MTA district. It is my privilege to represent township officials throughout the state as MTA second vice president."

Kevin Beeson, Treasurer

Supervisor, Pine River Township (Griot Co.)



"I'm excited for the challenge of helping to lead this organization, and working with friends and colleagues from around the state."

Malinda Cole-Crocker, Secretary

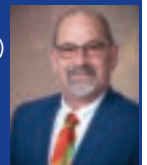
Supervisor, Buchanan Chtr. Township (Berrien Co.)



"My role in MTA teaches me to be a stronger leader and advocate for township government."

Marvin Radtke, Jr., Member-at-large

Supervisor, Green Lake Township (Grand Traverse Co.)



"An interest in continuing well-planned social and economic sustenance and development for the community, region and state is one of my goals."

Bill Deater, Immediate Past President

Supervisor, Grant Township (St. Clair Co.)



"It is my privilege to continue to help lead the organization that serves townships and represents township residents statewide. To be an advocate for my community and the Association is an honor."

Welcoming Ken Verkest to the MTA Board

Harrison Charter Township (Macomb Co.) Supervisor **Kenneth Verkest** has been elected to the MTA Board of Directors, serving as director of MTA District 21, which encompasses Lapeer, Oakland and Macomb Counties. Verkest was elected to the position at a caucus election held at MTA's Annual Conference.



Verkest

Verkest, who has served as supervisor since 2011, hopes that his role on the MTA Board allows him to further broaden his service to his community, region and the government closest to the people. "The greatest reward of serving in local government is helping and learning from others," he said. "I hope that my service as a district director for MTA leads to more opportunities to learn from and help others.

"I hope to be able to help others, share what I've learned, learn more, and advocate for Michigan townships," he added of his goals for serving on the Association's Board of Directors.

The effect of new legislation is a continuing challenge for MTA and townships, Verkest noted—and the organization and its members are up to the challenge. "The state Legislature is constantly considering legislation that will impact townships," he said. "We have to have great representation—and we do!"

Prior to his role as supervisor, Verkest served as township trustee from 2008 to 2011, and was also a member of the township zoning board of appeals for five years, from 2006 to 2011. He has been a Knights of Columbus member since 1997, and is a Macomb County YMCA Advisory Board member and Friendship Clubhouse Advisory Board member.



2021 MTA President Peter Kleiman, Harris Township (Menominee Co.) supervisor (*above right*), was honored with the MTA Immediate Past President Award, presented by 2022 MTA President Bill Deater. The award, given at MTA's 2023 Annual Meeting on April 20, recognizes Kleiman's contributions and continued leadership and service to MTA and all Michigan townships.



Recognizing the TGA 'Class of 2023'



The Township Governance Academy (TGA) graduating class of 2023 crossed the stage during a ceremony at the Opening Session of MTA's Annual Conference. Seven individuals joined the ranks of more than 110 officials who have earned the prestigious TGA credential (*pictured above, from left*): **Theresa Bills**, treasurer, **Groveland Township** (Oakland Co.); **Phil Deschaine**, treasurer, **Meridian Charter Township** (Ingham Co.); **Blair Evans**, planning commissioner and member of the zoning board of appeals (ZBA) and board of review, **Yates Township** (Lake Co.); **Travis Howell**, ZBA member, **Davison Township** (Genesee Co.); **Jenell Keller**, deputy clerk, **Groveland Township** (Oakland Co.); **Maria Sandow**, supervisor, **Larkin Charter Township** (Midland Co.); and **Kathy VanderKolk**, treasurer, **Chippewa Township** (Isabella Co.).

"We honor these seven individuals for their commitment to local governance—and to constantly learning to be the best local leaders they can be," said MTA Executive Director Neil Sheridan, who presented the graduates with their certificates, joined by 2022 MTA President **Bill Deater**.

The graduates will put the knowledge, skills and tools that they learned in the Academy to use in their own communities. "Some of the worst errors come from not knowing what you don't know—or not even knowing that there is something to be known!" Evans said. "TGA gives a broad understanding and perspective of township governance, its functions and their connections. The program provides essential skills that apply to collaborating with people within government and in the community."



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Township flags inspire local pride, sense of history

When Buchanan Charter Township (Berrien Co.) Trustee Lynn Ferris graduated from MTA’s Township Governance Academy five years, he knew just what he wanted his final Academy project to be: creating the township’s first flag.

“Our township board was thrilled with the concept of our own flag,” said Supervisor **Malinda Cole-Crocker**. “Everyone was able to give input about the design. It strengthened our board. It was important to us to have something that made us stand out from other local municipalities.”

Inspired—like so many other townships—by the Township Parade of Flags, which helps to kick off the Opening Session of MTA’s Annual Educational Conference each year, Ferris set to work, using the township’s logo and a burgundy background to create the township’s first flag.

At this year’s Parade of Flags, the township was able to debut a brand-new flag (*pictured on page 3*), after it became a charter township following the 2020 Census. “Our township is expanding,” Cole-Crocker explained. “Our flag was updated to reflect the charter status, and a new design was created as well. A flag was a simple and effective way to bring our township a little closer together.”

Many Michigan townships celebrate the essence of their community with a flag displayed at their township hall. The Parade of Flags, which this year included nearly 50 townships (*see list at right*), also provides townships the opportunity to share a little part of their pride and history by taking part in the annual event. Cole-Crocker urges all township to create a flag of their own to celebrate the uniqueness of their community. “It forms a common sense of community,” she said.

Don’t have a flag? Here are some tips to get you started, and maybe we’ll see you next year at the 2024 Annual Educational Conference for what some attendees call, “the most inspirational part of the week!”

What size should the flag be?

The standard flag size is 3-by-5 feet. However, some townships have banners that work well. Township flag designs cover a wide range of subjects.

What should be on the flag?

Michigan townships have designed flags with township logos, farms, sheep, bears, Great Lakes freighters and even buzz-saw blades. The flags commonly include the township name, its incorporation date, and a motto or the county name. Choose a design that represents what is unique or outstanding about your township. You may consider holding a community flag design contest, or a contest for local schoolchildren, as many townships have done. Just remember to limit the number of colors allowed in the contest. The more colors you have in a design, the more expensive the flag may be to produce.

What's the best way to make a flag?

There's no one right way to make your flag. Is someone in your township talented in sewing or another craft? Some townships have produced hand-sewn or hand-painted flags. In some cases, townships produce their first flag by hand and then have additional flags made commercially, particularly for outdoor use.

There are two common commercial methods for making flags: appliquéd and screen-printed. Appliquéd flags are sewn together and may include embroidery. Screen-printed flags are printed with inks or dyes. The method you choose may depend on how many flags you plan to make, whether the flag will be used indoors or outdoors, and how complex the design is. If you want a single flag for use in the township hall and the Parade of Flags, an appliquéd flag may be the best choice. If your township wants several flags to use indoors and outdoors, screen-printing may be more economical.

How long does it take to make a flag?

The production method you choose and the complexity of your flag's design will dictate the amount of time needed to produce a flag. On average, you should allow at least one month for the actual production.

What's the average cost of a flag?

The price of a custom flag varies according to the production method, the design complexity and the number of flags you order. The township may wish to ask several flag companies for an estimate, based on your design. Flag accessories often come in sets that include a flag pole, base, tassel and an eagle or other finial for the top of the pole. *Turn to page 28 for more guidance on displaying your township, and other, flags.*

Michigan flag manufacturers

Below is a sample of flag manufacturers serving Michigan. Check your local listings or reach out to townships in your area for other recommendations.

- **American Flag & Banner Company**—(248) 288-3010
- **Bay Supply Marketing**—www.baysupplyinc.com
- **Flagpoles, Etc.**—<https://flagpolesetc.com>
- **Kalamazoo Flag**—<https://kalamazooflag.com>
- **Rocket Enterprises**—rocketenterprise.com
- **Signs by Tomorrow**—www.signsbytomorrow.com
- **The Flagpole Company**—www.theflagpoleco.com

2023 Township Parade of Flags participants

Nearly 50 townships took part in the Parade of Flags at MTA's 2023 Annual Conference—the largest parade we've had in many years! Reach out to these townships to find out more about how, where and why they created their own township flag for guidance and inspiration to create your own.

Albee Township (Saginaw Co.)
Augusta Charter Township (Washtenaw Co.)
Bangor Charter Township (Bay Co.)
Banks Township (Antrim Co.)
Breitung Charter Township (Dickinson Co.)
Buchanan Charter Township (Berrien Co.)
Canton Charter Township (Wayne Co.)
Carrollton Township (Saginaw Co.)
Chesaning Township (Saginaw Co.)
Chippewa Township (Isabella Co.)
Coldwater Township (Branch Co.)
Comstock Charter Township (Kalamazoo Co.)
Denton Township (Roscommon Co.)
Eureka Charter Township (Montcalm Co.)
Filer Charter Township (Manistee Co.)
Fort Gratiot Charter Township (St. Clair Co.)
Fruitland Township (Muskegon Co.)
Garfield Charter Township (Grand Traverse Co.)
Glen Arbor Township (Leelanau Co.)
Grand Blanc Charter Township (Genesee Co.)
Groveland Township (Oakland Co.)
Harrison Charter Township (Macomb Co.)
Homer Township (Midland Co.)
James Township (Saginaw Co.)
Klacking Township (Ogemaw Co.)
Lake Charter Township (Berrien Co.)
LaSalle Township (Monroe Co.)
Marion Township (Livingston Co.)
Markey Township (Roscommon Co.)
Marquette Charter Township (Marquette Co.)
Meridian Charter Township (Ingham Co.)
Monitor Charter Township (Bay Co.)
Morton Township (Mecosta Co.)
Niles Charter Township (Berrien Co.)
Ontwa Township (Cass Co.)
Orion Charter Township (Oakland Co.)
Otsego Lake Township (Otsego Co.)
Oxford Charter Township (Oakland Co.)
Pinconning Township (Bay Co.)
Plainfield Charter Township (Kent Co.)
Pokagon Township (Cass Co.)
Putnam Township (Livingston Co.)
Raisin Charter Township (Lenawee Co.)
Roscommon Township (Roscommon Co.)
Sebawaing Township (Huron Co.)
Spring Lake Township (Ottawa Co.)
Union Township (Grand Traverse Co.)
Van Buren Charter Township (Wayne Co.)
Washington Charter Township (Macomb Co.)
White Lake Charter Township (Oakland Co.)

Etiquette for flag displays

In addition to asking how to create a township flag, on a regular basis, officials also ask MTA about the proper etiquette for township and United States flags. How should flags be displayed, either at the township hall or in an event, such as MTA's Parade of Flags? What is—and isn't—allowed when it comes to the U.S. flag?

While the use of the township flag is up to the discretion of each township, the uses and traditions prescribed to the U.S. flag can dictate how and where the township flag should also be handled and displayed. The following guidelines are dictated by the Flag Code, which formalizes and unifies the traditional ways in which we give reverence to the U.S. flag. Follow these guidelines for your township flag as well, to ensure that this symbol of your community gets the respect it deserves.

Displaying the flag outdoors

When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting from a window, balcony or building, the union of the flag should be at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff. When it is displayed from the same flagpole with another flag—state, township, etc.—the U.S. flag must always be at the top. When flown with other flags on separate flagpoles that are the same height and in a straight line, the U.S. flag is always placed to its own right. No other flag may be larger than the U.S. flag or placed above it, and the U.S. flag is always raised first and lowered last. Ordinarily, the U.S. flag should be displayed only between sunrise and sunset. If displayed at night, it should be illuminated.

Displaying the flag indoors

When on display, the U.S. flag is always positioned to its own right. Other flags should be to the left. The U.S. flag should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states, localities or societies are grouped for display.

The Flag Code is silent as to ornaments (finials) for flagstaffs. The selection of the type of finial used is a matter of township preference.

Parading the flag

When carried in a procession, the flag should be to the right of the marchers. When other flags are carried, the U.S. flag may be centered in front of the others or carried to their right. When the flag passes in a procession, or when it is hoisted or lowered, all should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Those present in uniform should render the military salute.

The flag in mourning

To place the flag at half-staff, hoist it to the peak for an instant and lower it to a position halfway between the top and bottom of the staff. The flag is to be raised again to the peak for a moment before it is lowered. On Memorial Day, the flag is displayed at half-staff until noon and at full staff from noon to sunset.

The flag is to be flown at half-staff in mourning for designated, principal government leaders, and upon presidential or gubernatorial order. Sign up to receive State of Michigan flag-lowering alerts by searching “Flag honors” at www.michigan.gov.

Unacceptable uses for the U.S. flag

The Flag Code also contains specific instructions on how the U.S. flag is not to be used. You may wish to follow these rules for your township flag as well.

- The flag should not be used as a drapery, or for covering a speaker's desk, draping a platform, or for any decoration in general. Use bunting of blue, white and red stripes for these purposes.
- The flag should never be used for any advertising purpose. It should not be embroidered, printed or otherwise impressed on such articles as cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins, boxes or anything intended to be discarded after temporary use. Advertising signs should not be attached to the staff or halyard.
- The flag should not be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform. A flag patch may be used on military, fire or police uniforms.
- The flag should never have placed on it, or attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, number, figure or drawing of any kind.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.
- When the flag is lowered, no part of it should touch the ground or any other object; it should be received by waiting hands and arms. To store the flag, it should be folded neatly and ceremoniously.
- The flag should be cleaned and mended when necessary. A worn or tattered U.S. flag should be destroyed by burning in a dignified manner.



What is the purpose and content of a W-2?

A Form W-2 is a wage and tax statement used to report financial information to the IRS and Social Security Administration (SSA). Employers—including townships—give employees a W-2 to report an employee’s income, taxes and benefits paid over the course of the year. A W-2 also contains the employee’s name, Social Security number, address, and the employer’s identification number (EIN) and address, as well as amounts paid into employer-sponsored retirement plans, health savings accounts and health care coverage.

When completing a W-2, it is important that the information reported to the IRS/SSA and township employees is accurate. A W-3 form is the total of all the W-2s issued to employees. This information should agree with the amounts reported quarterly to the IRS on Form 941. Prior to issuing the W-2/W-3, townships should verify that these totals match by adding the information reported on quarterly 941 tax return forms, and compare them to the W-2/W-3 totals.



What township employees receive Forms W-2?

The township must file W-2s for all employees to whom they paid salaries or wages of \$600 or more throughout the year and withheld income tax, Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes, and state unemployment taxes. All full- and part-time employees receive W-2s; this includes all elected and appointed officials. Any independent contractors working for the township receive Forms 1099.



Do election workers receive W-2s or 1099s?

Election workers are township employees who report their wages with a W-2. They are, however, a very special class of employee under federal tax law:

- Payments to election workers are generally exempt from federal and state income tax withholdings (IRC Section 3401). **Note:** The amounts the township pays election workers for services are taxable to them; they are merely exempt from income tax withholding for the amounts under the annual threshold below.
- Election workers making less than \$2,000 per year in 2023 are exempt from Social Security and

Medicare taxes, even if the employment is covered by a Section 218 agreement. This was changed by “Modification 975” to the state’s master agreement with the SSA, which was effective Jan. 1, 2004.

If the above exemptions apply—that is no federal income, Social Security or Medicare taxes were withheld—federal tax law does not require employers paying less than \$600 to these election workers to issue W-2s.



When and how do we file W-2s?

According to the IRS, W-2s must be filed by Jan. 31 of the following tax year. In addition to giving employees a copy of a W-2, employers file all W-2s with the SSA either electronically or by mail.

To mail the W-2, the forms and instructions can be ordered from www.irs.gov. Printing this form directly from the IRS website and sending it in can result in penalties because it is not an official form. Several copies of the form need to be filled out once received. Copy A, the red form, is filled out and sent in to the SSA, Copy B is filed with the employee’s federal tax return, Copy C is for the employee’s records, and Copy D is for the employer’s records.

While the SSA prefers all employers to electronically file their W-2s, electronic filing is required only for employers with 250 or more employees. However, townships with 50 or fewer employees can, and may wish to consider, using the SSA’s Business Services Online (BSO) to create their W-2s and submit them when they are completed. Townships with 50 or more employees can upload their completed W-2s to the BSO and e-file them. To do so, simply register online use the free software provided by the SSA. For more information, visit www.ssa.gov/employer/bsohbnew.htm.

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.



upcoming MTA workshop

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Dig into the elements of managing your township cemetery

Township cemeteries provide a positive personal service to residents during a difficult time. Gain a better understanding of the rules and regulations, along with other important aspects of cemetery management and administration during this half-day workshop.

Led by **MTA Member Information Services Liaison Cindy Dodge**, a featured Michigan Association of Municipal Cemeteries conference speaker, *Cemetery Management and Administration* is an informative workshop that will dig into elements of green or natural burials and other options many conventional cemeteries are incorporating. Participants will also:

- Review the **legal obligations** for cemeteries, including content and procedures for adopting a cemetery ordinance.
- Explore fees and other **budgeting and financial aspects**, including tips on dealing with special cemetery management issues.
- Examine the **role of advisory committees, cemetery sextons and other caretakers**, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the clerk and township board.

Registration fees include lunch, served at noon.

Continue the learning with MTA resources

Participants can pre-purchase MTA's *Township Cemetery Management* book for the discounted price of \$34.50. This book offers a review of statutes that govern township authority over cemeteries, along with the financial aspects of this valuable service. Sample policies that can be customized for your township's use are included with purchase. Pre-purchased books will be distributed at check-in. A limited number will also be available to purchase on-site.



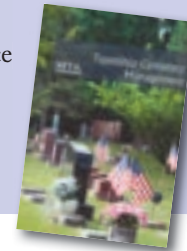
Held from 1 to 5 p.m on:

June 6: Holiday Inn, Jackson

June 20: Treetops Resort, Gaylord

June 21: Courtyard by Marriott, Mt. Pleasant

Looking for a class further north? Join us in the U.P. on July 18! See the following page for details.



Cemetery Management Registration Form

Township _____ County _____

Name & Title _____ Add Cemetery Management book

Name & Title _____ Add Cemetery Management book

Name & Title _____ Add Cemetery Management book

NOTE: Payment must accompany form in order to be processed.

Check enclosed (payable to MTA)

Charge to: (circle one) MasterCard VISA

Card # _____ Expires _____

Print Card Holder's Name _____ CSV 3-digit code _____ Signature _____

Which location will you attend?

June 6: Jackson June 20: Gaylord June 21: Mt. Pleasant

Early-bird Rate*: Expires two weeks prior to event date
\$100/person (Premium subscribers pay \$80/person**)

Regular Rate*: Begins two weeks from event date
\$125/person (Premium subscribers pay \$100/person**)

On-site Rate*: Applies one week from event date
\$150/person (Premium subscribers pay \$120/person**)

_____ (# registered) x \$ _____ (rate*) = \$ _____

_____ (# of cemetery books) x (\$34.50/book*) = \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED = \$ _____

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

****Premium subscribers are townships that have purchased an online learning subscription to MTA Online at the Premium level. Find out if your township is a premium subscriber at www.michigantownships.org/learning/mtaonline.**



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.michigantownships.org. Need event registration assistance?
Call (517) 321-6467, ext. 226. For other event-related questions, call (517) 321-6467, ext. 221.

Education Extravaganza Coming to the U.P. in July

MTA is packing up our resources, publications and municipal experts and bringing them to the Island Resort in Harris (west of Escanaba) for two full days of education! Join us for a session, a day or both days, based on your areas of interest. Here's what's happening, when:



Cemetery Management & Administration

July 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; includes lunch

Township cemeteries provide a positive personal service to residents during a difficult time. Gain a better understanding of the rules and regulations for managing your township cemetery from MTA's own Cindy Dodge, a frequent speaker for the Michigan Association of Municipal Cemeteries. Dig into legal obligations for cemeteries and procedures for adopting a cemetery ordinance. Explore fees, budgeting and financial aspects as well as elements of green or natural burials. Examine the roles of advisory committees, sextons and caretakers AND the duties and responsibilities of the clerk and township board.



Financial Fundamentals

July 19, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; includes lunch

Oversight of your township's financial affairs is a critical function that protects you from serious pitfalls, including fraud, embezzlement, misappropriation of funds and more. Don't miss this review of effective solutions for outlining (and communicating) your township's approach to financial matters. Gain insights into effective financial policies and procedures that not only make your life easier, but that can be adapted for your township's specific circumstances. Delve into the "do's and don'ts" for enhancing and implementing financial policies that work for any size township, and learn best practices for how the clerk and treasurer can work together to safeguard your township's finances



Insights into Planning & Zoning

July 18, 4 to 8 p.m.; includes dinner

Lack of knowledge about planning and zoning and laws that townships are required to follow is one of the biggest challenges facing planning commission and zoning board of appeals members. It's difficult for many township board members too. Join MTA legal counsel to review the legalities—and controversies—that can come with balancing private property rights with public interest and your township's authority to regulate land use. Explore special uses from what goes in your ordinance (and why) to the difference between special and conditional uses. Learn how a variance might impact a use, the process for review and approval, and whether you can revoke a use. We'll talk about public hearings, site plans, timeframes and share what your township needs to know about the placement of solar sites.



Hot Topics for Township Fire Departments

July 19, 6 to 9 p.m.; includes dinner

Providing emergency and fire protection services for your community may be one of the more complicated—and expensive—services your township provides. This class can help board members and fire officials get a handle on financial emergencies in your township fire department. We'll examine funding and cost recovery, provide insights into joint authorities and review must-haves for your fire ordinance. You'll walk away armed with a better understanding of the legalities and financials that can help turn down the heat on some of the hot issues facing your fire department.

All classes are on Eastern Standard Time. Register today to receive discounted rates. \$100/class when registered by June 30. \$125/class from July 1-7; \$150/class effective July 8. Visit www.bit.ly/twptraining to register.

aroundthe**state**

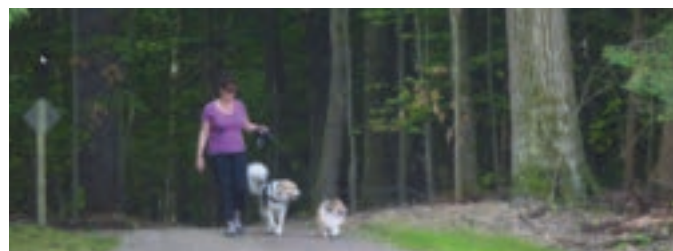
townships in the spotlight



Burt Township

Burt Township (Cheboygan Co.), situated in the north central part of northern Michigan's lower peninsula, is home to nearly 700 residents. More than half of the six-mile by six-mile township is water—Burt Lake. The lake, for which township was named, received its moniker in recognition of a state surveyor William Burt. The lake is part of an important inland water route, stretching from Crooked Lake and Conway, near Petoskey, in the south to Lake Huron in the north via the mouth of the Cheboygan River. Native Americans used the route prior to European settlement, and it was heavily used for commercial transportation of logs in the second half of the 1800s.

In the last two decades of the 19th century, the Michigan Central Railroad and the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad laid track through to Cheboygan, leading to the foundation of many villages, including that of Burt Lake. About the time that lumbering was slowing down, the resort business began to grow, creating the beginnings of the seasonal tourist



industry that is still important today. The water route is still in use and frequented by many recreational boats.

Along with the water providing an abundance of recreation opportunities, the Burt Lake Trail extends 18 miles around the north end of the lake and provides safe walking, running and biking trails for residents and visitors to enjoy while taking in the scenery. Burt Lake Trail was the first looped, non-motorized, long-distance bike trail in northern Michigan, connecting the Northwest State Trail and the North Central State Trail.

The township is currently busy making improvements for its residents and businesses. A new township sign was created by a resident in neighboring

Mullet Township

(Cheboygan Co.). The township is also working

to bring internet to the west side of the township, with the installation of broadband fiber offering higher quality internet access to more residents.





Effective strategies

Practical techniques

Valuable resources

Clerks Retreat

September 26-27

Planning & Zoning Retreat

October 3-4

Trustees Retreat

October 3-4

Supervisors Retreat

October 5-6

Strategic Management & Innovation Retreat

October 5-6

Treasurers Retreat

October 10-11

MTA's 2023 Professional Development Retreats
Connect with MTA and your fellow officials face to face this fall for two days of exclusive learning, networking and fun!

No one understands townships or your roles and responsibilities like the Michigan Townships Association. That's why we've created our unique **Professional Development Retreats** with education and information designed specifically for YOU.

As a leader in your community, you are expected to have **solutions** for a wide variety of challenges. How do you ensure you are equipped to anticipate, and develop **strategies** to overcome, virtually any situation that arises?

Join MTA, your colleagues and other municipal experts at **Boyne Highlands at Harbor Springs** this fall. You'll walk away with insights tailored to your role in the township and connections that will last a lifetime!

Registration materials are coming soon!
Visit www.michigantownships.org for details.

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