



## SPRING NEWSLETTER

### Township Government In Illinois

Township government has served both the rural and urban residents of Illinois since 1848. Although Illinois' 1,432 townships still function according to provisions of the Township Act of 1874, amendments to the act have kept township government as modern as any and more progressive than most. Township government is grassroots government, the closest level of government to the people.

By statute, three services are to be provided by townships: a general assistance program to qualifying residents, property assessment, and maintenance of township roads and bridges. General assistance at the township level provides immediate help to the destitute, according to local standards and needs and with local dollars.

Township road district commissioners are directly responsible for maintaining more than 53 percent of the state's total road miles and nearly half of all bridges. These roads and bridges provide access for police and fire protection, school buses and rural postal service. Newly elected Washington Township Road Commissioner Mike Smith and his crew are responsible for maintaining over 70 miles of roads and ditches within the township.

But beyond these mandated functions, many townships offer a variety of social services designed to improve life for their township residents, including senior citizen and youth programs, transportation, and cemetery maintenance. Washington Township has no "township" cemeteries, but does provide many services for its residents including transportation, early voting and senior events.

The township Board has not raised the tax levy in *seven* years and will receive approximately \$275,000 to provide these services and to fund the Assessor's Office, General Assistance and maintain the Washington Township Center. In the last four years, the Board has reallocated \$30,000 in funds from the Town Levy to the Community Building Levy to ensure the Community Building Board of Managers have the necessary resources to maintain and upgrade the building. This is a permanent increase to their funds and was done without raising taxes. The additional funding has paid off as the Board of Managers have made several significant improvements over the last few years including painting, refinishing wood floors, and most recently, installing a handicap lift. Starting in early June, a major sidewalk replacement project is starting and you can read more about that project on page 3.

Lastly, Washington Township accounts for only about 5% of your total tax bill if you live in Beecher and 8% if you live in the rural areas of the township. The township website offers residents the opportunity to review Public Information and is committed to "government transparency".

### Township's Dial-A-Ride Service To Resume Operations

After nearly 14 months, the Washington Township Dial-A-Ride service will resume operations for those who need transportation within Washington Township. The service will operate one day a week (Wednesdays) and additional service dates may be added if there is a demand. All recommended CDC Covid protocols will be followed to ensure the safety of our driver and riders. For more information call the Township offices at 708-946-2026 or visit our website at: [www.washingtontownshipil.com](http://www.washingtontownshipil.com).

## Recycling Center to Close - A letter from Supervisor Mike Stanula

### Friends and Neighbors,

I hope that this issue of the Washington Township Spring Newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and happy. The past year has no doubt been a struggle as we try to get back to some kind of “normal”. This past April 22, we celebrated Earth Day. The day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. The day inspires us to act towards the protection of the environment and focus on the need for conversation. Hoping to make the world a better place for future generations. Washington Township has been involved with and encouraged recycling for more than 12 years. We had one of the regions first electronic recycling sites, we have textile and book recycling stations, annual hazardous waste drop off events and we have plastic, glass and paper recycling stations. All these green programs are in partnership with Will County Green. The County coordinates and funds the programs. Without their help we cannot support these programs.

Let me now share with you some realities of our recycling programs. The electronic recycling became so popular that our multiple shipping containers became over filled and items were regularly piled up around the containers. The company who took the recycling needed to increase their fees because electronic recycling was unprofitable at the fee they were charging. This burden fell upon the Township, which we could not absorb. This forced us to discontinue the program at our site and the County elected to relocate the program to Peotone. The County is running this program and it appears to be doing well. This brings me to the general recycling saga at the Washington township site. This program too is in partnership with Will County Green. They provide the bins, pay for the pick-up service and for the shipping fees to the special waste sites. We provide the location. Here is how the process works. Once a week a truck, that is just for recycling, comes to empty the bins which presumably are only filled with recyclables. This process uses an overhead system to dump into the top of the truck. Often when this happens, paper flies out and across the adjoining fields and property this is an embarrassment and unfortunately unavoidable. The truck then hauls the recyclables to a center that separates the paper, plastic, glass and aluminum. A bin is considered “contaminated” if there is general garbage mixed with the recyclables. If it is found that there are things (garbage, tires, carpet, etc.) other than recyclables then the truck must go to the garbage transfer station and not the recycling facility and there are additional fees for this. We continuously see carpet, furniture, tires, household garbage and other pollutants mixed in and around our recycling bins.

Throughout the years we have relocated the bins to make them more visible from the street, added bins, put up signage and cameras, added fencing and locked gates and curtailed the operating hours. None of these actions have stopped the few (many of which come from other counties and out of state), who constantly abuse this privilege and service. I have communicated with Will County Green a number of times on our situation. Regrettably, we have exhausted all of our options for this service in its current format. We will be working again with Will County Green to come up with an alternative recycling program. **However as of June 1, 2021 recycling at the Washington Township Center will no longer be available.**

We are dedicated to finding a new recycling plan in the near future that will benefit our community. Because it's one of the things that make Beecher a Great place to be!

**From Assessor Mary Tamez**

*"To give real service, you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity."  
Douglas Adams*

This past year has brought many changes to our days. Learning new ways to interact with others, trying to feel connected without the intimacy of face-to-face meetings, and helping others from a far. I would like to thank you all for the patience and acceptance of the unknown and learning to change together.

As many of you may know, all the exemption renewals for the 2020 year were automatically applied for by the Will County Supervisor of Assessments Office. The decision was made due to most of our applicants being seniors and those with disabilities. As of today, they will be likely doing the same for the 2021 year. Due to the timing of the passing of HB3289 being signed, we are asking you to also be hopeful the best decision will be made to continue to keep everyone safe for the 2021 year and if for some reason it does not pass, we will be sending out the renewal forms. I will keep you informed as I receive any additional information.

Currently, there are some changes for the 2020 property tax bill payable in 2021. The Will County Treasurer will be giving the option to make **four** payments rather than two for the 2021 tax bill! The due dates for these four payments will be:

**June 3 / August 3 / Sep 3 / Nov 3**

This change has been made for this year only to try to help those effected by the pandemic. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the Will County Treasurer Tim Brophy at 815-740-4675 or email [Treasurer@willcountyillinois.com](mailto:Treasurer@willcountyillinois.com).

I am looking forward to spring, the beautiful flowers of our community, and the hopes of life we once knew with the smiles that are most certainly missed.

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**News From the Community Building Board of Managers**

Even with the restrictions and limitations put in place to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid 19 pandemic, the Community Hall Board of Managers has continued to work on updating and improving the facility. We recently replaced the old appliances in the kitchen with a new refrigerator and 10-burner, 2-oven stove. Within the next few months, we will be replacing all the sidewalks around the building and restructuring the main entrance to provide a larger platform and install ramp access. Once the sidewalk project is finished, we will be updating the landscaping around the building.

We would like to thank Ron Mazurek for his service and tenure on the Board and congratulate Dan Waterman and Teresa Peterson on being re-elected to another 4-year term. We would also like to welcome Stacy Mazurek as the newest member to the Board of Managers. The hall continues to be accepting applications for rent from any Washington Township residents. The standard fee is \$125 per day per level. We encourage anyone interested in seeing the building or reserving a date to contact Kellie Karstensen, Community Hall Manager at 708-417-6403 to check availability and details.

**CARD OF THANKS**

I want to thank the residents of Washington Township / Beecher for allowing me to serve as an elected WT Community Building Board Manager for the last eight years. Over the last eight years, the board has been fiscally responsible while completing many updates to the building. It has been a pleasure to serve with my fellow board members and most importantly making sure a building with so much history in the community is available for all resident's to use for years to come. Thank you,

Ronald S. Mazurek, Washington Township Community Building Board Manager

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## **Washington Township Board Changes**

The makeup of the Washington Township Board changed slightly after the April election. Trustee Paul Goldrick decided not to run for reelection and former Board member Teresa Peterson ran unopposed for the open seat. Pat Peters was elected as our new Assessor and Mike Smith, who was appointed to Highway Commissioner, after former Commissioner Jerry Meyer retired, won his first election as Highway Commissioner.

### **FIRST OF ALL:**

A huge "Thank You" to former Trustee Paul Goldrick! Paul, a past winner of the "Beecher Citizen of the Year" award and a Board member for eight years was a dedicated and active Board member, who spend countless hours overseeing the Washington Township Food Pantry with his group of volunteers. Ever the public servant, Paul will continue to run the Food Pantry as a volunteer.

### **Meet Your New Officials!**

#### **Assessor Pat Peters**

Pat is your Assessor-Elect and will take office on January 1, 2022. Pat has been married to her husband Les for 41 years and owns a farm in Beecher/Washington Township.

For most of Pat's working career, and since 1993, she has been the Transportation Director for Rich Township in Cook County. The transportation department provides rides for Senior Citizens and Disabled and is one of the largest in Cook County. Over the years, Pat has managed a staff from 8 to 15 employees. Under her direction, the transportation department upgraded computer systems, consistently met all mandated requirements and applied for and received several RTA grants and other funding sources through the years.

Her interest in Property Tax Assessing was sparked by helping out occasionally in the Assessor's office in Rich Township. This eventually led her to take the qualifying classes to receive the Certified Illinois Assessing Officer (CIAO) designation. Pat is eager to bring her skill set and leadership to the residents of Washington Township. She will be ready to assist you with any and all exemptions you are entitled to receive and is prepared to help residents understand and ask questions about their tax bill. Pat is also committed to ensuring all assessments are fair and equitable.

#### **Highway Commissioner Mike Smith**

Mike is a lifelong resident of Beecher and graduated from Beecher High School in 2006 and went on to graduate from the Universal Technical Institute in 2009. At only 32 years old, Mike is no stranger to hard work and worked throughout high school and college at Ohlendorf Restorations as a body technician and painter. After college, Mike worked as a school bus technician for the Beecher School District and started working for the Washington Township Highway Department in 2014. Mike quickly caught on and worked his way up to Foreman and was appointed to Highway Commissioner in 2020. He is working on short and long term plans to address roads and drainage issues and is excited to get to work at his new full-time position. Mike is married and has two children.

#### **Trustee Teresa Peterson**

Teresa is a lifelong resident of Beecher and served as a Board member from 2009 -12 and then became the Washington Township Director of Transportation for 5 years until Will Ride was created. Teresa has 3 daughters, all married, and 4 grandchildren. She has worked over 26 years in the banking industry and enjoys it "very much". Teresa was also re-elected to the Community Building Board of Managers and will begin her 2nd four-year term. She is excited to serve the residents of Washington Township!

## Safety Tips for the Grill - Protect Yourself & Your Family

Grilling Facts: July is the peak month for grillfires and roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.

Hundreds of fires are started every year by using barbecue grills, and there can be extensive damage. Careless grilling cost millions of dollars and often destroys more than property.

### GRILLING SAFETY

In order to help you enjoy safe delicious grilling remember to always do the following:

- Always use flame-resistant barbecue mitts and barbecue tools with long, heat-resistant handles
- Have proper lid or grill top
- Keep barbecue grills in a level position at all times. An unstable unit can easily be tipped over.
- Place barbecue grills at least five feet away from any combustible material.
- Place your grill so that sparks and smoke won't fly toward buildings, furniture or people.
- Use only enough charcoal to last for the time it will be needed.
- Properly attach your ash catcher to the kettle grill.
- Douse the coals thoroughly with water after grilling.
- Transport, store and use the propane cylinder in an upright position.

**Here are some grilling behaviors that should be avoided to help protect you and your family against injury.**

- Never leave infants, children or pets near an unattended hot barbecue grill.
- Never add liquid lighter fluid to hot or even warm coals.
- Never wear loose clothing around a hot barbecue grill; it could catch on fire.
- Never grill on a wooden deck.
- Never barbecue in a confined space.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, alcohol or a cigarette lighter to start a fire.
- Never move outdoor barbecue indoors. Smoldering charcoal will produce lethal concentrations of carbon monoxide.
- Never store briquettes outside where they can get wet. When they are dry, they become a flammable solid creating a fire hazard.
- Never discard used briquettes in a cardboard carton or any other combustible container.

**Thank you to Beecher Fire Department Fire Chief Joe Falaschetti for contributing this important information!**



### Your Township Officials:

#### Supervisor

Mike Stanula

[supervisor@washingtontownshipil.com](mailto:supervisor@washingtontownshipil.com)

#### Clerk

Joe Burgess

[clerk@washingtontownshipil.com](mailto:clerk@washingtontownshipil.com)

#### Assessor

Mary Margaret Tamez

[assessor@washingtontownshipil.com](mailto:assessor@washingtontownshipil.com)

#### Highway Commissioner

Mike Smith

[commissioner@](mailto:commissioner@)

[washingtontownshipil.com](http://washingtontownshipil.com)

#### Trustees

Tracy Heldt

Mark Herlitz

George Obradovich

Teresa Peterson

#### Office Coordinator / General Assistance

Tammy Hitzelburger

[transportation@washingtontownshipil.com](mailto:transportation@washingtontownshipil.com) OR

[ga@washingtontownshipil.com](mailto:ga@washingtontownshipil.com)

#### Community Building Board of Managers

Stacy Mazurek

Teresa Peterson

Dan Waterman

#### Newsletter Editor:

Clerk Joe Burgess



**A Note To Our Seniors!**

*We MISS you, we really do!* We missed hosting our spring & fall Senior Breakfast, the Holiday Dinner, Movie Nights and the bus trips to see our favorite teams play baseball and we are committed to bring back ALL of our programs as soon as it's safe to do so. Remember, our office is open and we are still there to help you in any way possible, even if it's just to call and say hello to Tammy!

*As a Reminder,* scammers are using every trick in the book to take advantage of unsuspecting people, especially during these unprecedented times. We urge our seniors to be extremely cautious when doing business with anyone soliciting by telephone. Scams may include offers to seal driveways, clean yards, paint or roof repairs. Other areas of fraud that target older adults include ATM use, Internet scams, sweepstakes, promotions, contests and other solicitations. If someone calls you asking for any personal information or offering a service you didn't request simply tell them you are not interested and hang up.

***Be safe and see you soon!***

**Washington Township Food Pantry**

Washington Township Food Pantry is open to any Washington Township individual or family that is in need of help. Offering canned foods, paper goods, cleaning items, frozen food and at times, fresh products, the pantry strives to provide quality items for those in need.

The pantry is open on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month from 9am - 10am AND from 6pm - 7pm. Please call Paul Goldrick at (708) 516-2594 for additional details or if you need assistance. Many thanks to the volunteers who assist at the pantry!

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**Schedule appointments between the hours of 6 am to 5 pm, Monday-Friday (A 24-hour notice up to 7 days advance notice is required)**

**Buses Operate - Monday - Friday 8 am to 5 pm - Weekend & holiday hours are NOT available**

**The Will-Ride "suggested" donations for rides outside Washington Township are \$4 one way or \$8 round trip**

**You MUST register with Washington Township to be eligible for Will-Ride**

**Restrictions Apply**

**Your Right To Know**

**The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides that all government bodies make public records readily available for inspection. You can access our agendas, minutes, recent budgets and many other items by visiting our website and clicking on the "Public Information" button on our homepage.**

**Don't see what you're looking for? Contact Clerk Joe Burgess at (708) 946-2026 Ext 1176**

**Learn more about Washington Township and the services we offer our residents by visiting us online at: [www.washingtontownshipil.com](http://www.washingtontownshipil.com)**

**LIKE us on:**



**UPCOMING TOWNSHIP ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Highway Commissioner Mike Smith has indicated that he will be concentrating on the following projects as construction season starts.

- **Blacktop 1 mile of Stoney Island between Indiana Ave and Corning Rd.**
- **Tar and Chip 1 mile of Kentucky Rd between Ashland Ave and Western Ave.**
- **Grind off the old surface and then tar and chip Racine Ave between Church Rd and Indiana Ave.**
- **Replace a major culvert under Stoney Island just North of Corning Ave**

PLEASE remember to **“Slow Down”** in construction zones during these projects and all other road projects throughout our area.

**Number of Early Voters Continues to Grow**

The number of residents, who vote early is continuing to rise across the state and nation and Washington Township is no exception.

In November, 4,664 township residents voted in the General Election and 1,254 (27%) of Washington Township voters utilized Early Voting. In April, 1,448 township residents voted and 271 (19%) voted early.

Per our resident’s requests, Saturday hours were offered for the April election and we received very positive feedback. The Clerk’s office will continue to offer this valuable service so our residents can exercise their right to vote at their convenience.

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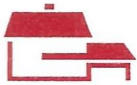





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**UPCOMING  
TOWNSHIP BOARD  
MEETING DATES**

The Washington Township Board meets on the **FIRST** Monday of every month (except on holidays or as noted) at the Washington Township Center located at 30200 Town Center Road. All meetings start at 7 pm and the public is urged to attend our meetings!

Public commentary is always welcome. Please call Supervisor Mike Stanula at 946-2026 if you need assistance.

- July 8, 2021 - Thursday
- August 2, 2021
- September 9, 2021 - Thursday
- October 4, 2021
- November 1, 2021
- December 6, 2021

**FROM CLERK JOE BURGESS**

The Washington Township Clerk's office provides the following services to all Washington Township residents!

- Voter registration
- Early Voting services during elections
- RTA Reduced Fare Permits. If you are a Senior Citizen or a Person with a Disability you can apply for a free or reduced fare permit, which can be used on all RTA services.
- Free Notary Public Service - call for details
- Temporary or Permanent Parking Placards
- Public Information - township records are available on our website or through the use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- The Clerk's office also maintains the township's website and mails the biannual newsletter

**Office Hours**

The Washington Township Offices are open Monday thru Friday from 9 am to 3 pm. We can be reached at (708) 946-2026.



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**RAILROAD QUIET ZONES ARE COMING**

**(it is now a matter of “when” not “if”)**

For many years, residents of Beecher wanted “Quiet Zones” for railroad crossings through Beecher. The “Quiet Zones” are nearly completed and will be implemented for the railroad crossings at Eagle Lake Road (Washington Township), Church Road, Hodges Street and Indiana Ave.

Once the improvements are completed in mid-May, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will be contacted for an inspection. Once inspected, the FRA will issue a final determination and public notice of the Quiet Zone and a 30-day notice period begins. After the notice period, Union Pacific Railroad will be asked to comply with the Quiet Zone permit. This process will take a while even after the improvements are completed. The Village asks that residents be patient during this process. Updates on the “Quiet Zone” process will be posted on the Village of Beecher website listed below and their FaceBook page.

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**HERE IS YOUR 2021 SPRING EDITION OF THE  
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