Running with John...

Spring Lake Township is such a solid governmental unit for many reasons. I want to share those reasons with you.

**Finances:**
- A very sound fund balance
- We have always had positive audit reports
- The lowest combined water/sewer rate in this area
- Compared to other area communities, we have a low total millage rate

**Fire Department:**
- A very well-equipped fire station on each side of the township, which means quick response times in every part of the Township
- Four fulltime firefighter/medical response people

**Water, Sewer and Public Service Department:**
- Our people are well trained and ready to help when needed
- Our sewer system is far more advanced than that of any nearby community

**Recreational Opportunities for our residents:**
- Rycenga Park – a large multi-opportunity park
- Our Bike Path System – over 26 miles of well-paved paths, connecting to other nearby paths
- Shared Parks – Spring Lake Central Park and Black Lake Park, which has a kayak launch

Dedicated, competent, experienced and responsive staff and elected officials

All these important features are why Spring Lake Township is the only one of the 1,260 townships in Michigan that has been able to achieve the Michigan Township Association’s very tough Township of Excellence Award three times. This award evaluates every aspect of township government and a township can only apply for this award once every four-year board term. Spring Lake Township has earned this stringent award three four-year terms in a row – 2012, 2016 and 2020. Fewer than 12 Michigan townships have earned this award once.

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News from the Clerk

THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the November election. The election in Spring Lake Township ran very smoothly, even though it was busy. Thanks to the precinct chair people and all the election inspectors who worked a long day at the polls or counting absentee ballots. Thank you to the voters who were patient while waiting to cast their ballot. Turnout was 67%, which was similar to the 2018 election. However, with the growth in the Township’s population, almost 1000 more votes were cast this year than in 2018.

We expect 2023 to be a much quieter election year.
Winter Holiday Safety Tips

Winter holidays are a great time for families and friends to get together but it’s also a time a year for a greater risk of fire. Follow these safety tips and you can enjoy a happy and fire-safe holiday season:

**Holiday Decorating**
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Throw away light strands with frayed or pinched wires.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- When using a real Christmas tree, make sure to keep it at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, candles, or radiators.
- Make sure to keep the tree watered daily.
- Turn off all your holiday lights before going to bed or leaving your home.
- **Blow out** lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed.

The Spring Lake Fire Department wishes everyone a fun and safe holiday season!

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**Township Employees**

Department Heads: These people keep all areas of the Township running smoothly and efficiently.

Amy Bessinger, CPFIM  
Finance  
Lukas Hill, AICP  
Community Development  
Heather Singleton  
Assessor  
John Stalzer  
Fire Chief  

DPW Staff:  
These workers take care of the parks, water, sewer, bike paths and streets. The Township and Village have been sharing a DPW department for over 3 years. This allows both municipalities flexibility in staffing and equipment.

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**Hemlock Wooly Adelgid**

Lukas Hill, Community Development Director

Michigan is home to over 170 million hemlock trees that are at risk of hemlock woolly adelgid infestation. Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is an invasive insect that causes tree death in four to ten years after initial infestation, creating a time-sensitive need for land managers to act. As of 2020, HWA has been detected in five lakeshore counties: Allegan, Ottawa, Muskegon, Oceana, and Mason. HWA is spread through birds, wildlife, campers, infested yard waste, and even hikers. The most effective treatment method for the control of HWA is the use of insecticides. There are two insecticides used in Michigan for HWA control – imidacloprid and dinotefuran. While dinotefuran moves much more rapidly the treatment is only effective for one to two years. Imidacloprid takes a year to begin control of the infestation, but will provide protection for five to seven years. There is a place for both treatment options depending on the health of your trees.

For more information on HWA, please visit https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/id-report/insects/hemlock-woolly-adelgid

For more information on assessing the health of your hemlocks, visit: https://savehemlocksnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Assessing-Hemlock-Health.pdf. For more information on treatment options, please contact the West Michigan CISMA Coordinator, Natalie Bekins, at natalie.bekins@macd.org or 616-414-2055.
Finance Report

Jim Koster, Treasurer and Amy Bessinger, Finance Director

Did you know that you can find your property tax and Township utility bill information online, available 24/7?

By following the link on our website to BS&A Online services, you can create an account to look up your property information, including viewing the current and prior years information on:

- Property Taxes – property values, taxes billed and paid, and additional Assessing information
- Utility Billing – the current water/sewer bill, history including meter readings, usage, amounts billed, and payment history

*If you are looking up your own property, choose Option 1 noting that you are the current owner of the property to see the information at no charge.*

As of October 2022 we have upgraded our payment platform to make it easier to pay your taxes and/or utility bills. By clicking the “Make Payment” button from the BS&A site, the amount due will automatically be added to your shopping cart as you are directed to our new payment platform. With this new upgrade, you can add additional payments for multiple bills/properties to your cart to check out one time instead of several times. You can also create an account for the payment platform by clicking “register account” to store your payment information for quicker checkout and to set up recurring payments from your credit or debit card. When you create your account, you can include your email and cell phone number for communication regarding payments, including past due notices. We may also use that contact information to send out important messages about your services.

To set up your account and view your property information, choose the Payments option at the top of our website www.springlaketwp.org. For questions or for help with navigating the site, you can call our office at (616) 842-0598. You can also email Emilie, esmith@springlaketwp.org, or Amy, abessinger@springlaketwp.org.

According to the Township Code, snow may not be deposited from a driveway onto a sidewalk, path or public street. If you use a plow service, make sure the driver knows the rules, because the homeowner will receive the citation. Note that the Township will plow the bike paths. Although drivers will do their best to avoid leaving snow in driveways, it is inevitable that some snow may be left in a driveway.

Assessing News

Heather Singleton, Assessor

After you purchase your property, the Assessing office needs your Property Transfer Affidavit, Principal Residence Exemption, and/or your Conditional Rescind Forms.

There are specific deadlines for these forms and all are found on our website. Contact us for a full explanation if you need further details.

Visit our website and you may find the answers to your questions or a form that you may need among the links.

**Our website:**
www.springlaketwp.org/departments/assessing-department

Our direct department number is (616) 844-2108. Our e-mail addresses are as follows:
dnorth@springlaketwp.org
hsingleton@springlaketwp.org
Waste Hauler Agreement

To fully understand the new Single Waste Hauler agreement the Spring Lake Township Board unanimously approved, it is necessary to know what led up to this new agreement.

Back in September 2006 the Board unanimously approved a new waste hauler ordinance which led to an agreement with Township waste haulers (RMS, Republic Waste, Waste Management (now Arrowaste) and Lake Effect Disposal). The advantages of that new agreement included lower rates from all waste haulers, safer roads for everyone, less noise, less wear on the local roads, and less exhaust pollution. This program has been very effective. The Board negotiated rates every year to keep the rates lower for Township residents.

In January 2022, the owners of RMS decided to sell their business to Republic Services. All their negotiations were done without the knowledge of any Township officials. In February 2022 the Board started discussing the waste hauler purchase agreement which had been made between RMS and Republic. After purchasing RMS, Republic was providing waste service to 85% of Township households. The Board received information from 22 nearby municipalities to determine how those municipalities handled waste collection. Eighteen of the municipalities responded that they had one hauler, and of those 18 municipalities, 9 of them had selected Republic to be their single hauler – including the City of Grand Haven and the City of Norton Shores. With this information, the Board decided to negotiate with Republic to determine what type of contract would be possible. In June, the Board held a public engagement meeting, offering residents a chance to express their opinions of moving to a single waste hauler, and discussing a possible waste hauler contract. After discussion at the June and July Board meetings, in August the Board agreed unanimously to a new waste hauler ordinance to allow for a single waste hauler, and contracted with Republic Waste Services. With this three-year agreement, Republic will pick up garbage, recycling material and yard waste for total $19.35 per month per resident. This will save most of the Township residents money on waste pickup. It will also mean less garbage truck traffic on the Township local roads, which increases safety and reduces local road wear, pollution, and noise. The contract goes into effect on January 1, 2023. This contract will be reviewed by Township officials, and the contract will go out for bid in 2026.

Residents will contract directly with Republic for service, and will pay the bill directly to Republic Services. To set up service, or if you have questions about the service, call Republic Services at 616-662-6790 or email them at Springlaket@RepublicServices.com.

Remember to clean up after your dog. Township ordinance requires that you clean up feces made by your dog. Let's keep the bike paths and streets clean for everyone's use. Thank you for your cooperation!