

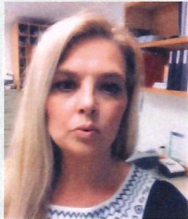
BOARD OF TRUSTEES



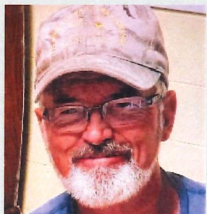
Ron VanZee, Supervisor
supervisor@hayestownshipmi.gov



Matt Cunningham, Trustee
Trustee2@hayestownshipmi.gov



Kristin Baranski, Clerk
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Hayestrustee5@gmail.com



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Hayes VOICE

TOWNSHIP

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

#18

May 2024

Working Together

I have to say, after attending the Annual Career and Tech Education Student Recognition Event held in Petoskey on April 23, I was very impressed. I really thought I was aware of the cooperative efforts of our local schools, businesses and Char-Em ISD. After listening to the speakers at this event, I came away knowing our education system in this area has recognized what pretty much every local business has been saying for the last several years: we need help, we need employees that have basic technical career-oriented training and skills, and we need a lot of them.

One hundred and thirteen students were honored for their high-achieving Career Education and performance were recognized from eleven local schools. They were honored in: Agriscience, Horticulture, Audio Engineering, Video Editing, Automotive Technology, Aviation Science & Technology, Business Administration & Management, Construction Technology, Culinary Arts, Drafting & Design Technology, Energy Fund/Line worker, Future Educator Academy, Graphics & Printing Technology, Health Occupations, Machine Tool Technology, Marketing Sales & Service, Welding Technology, Woodworking & Furniture Making.

Our daughter was one of the students that were honored that night, and as she graduates this year, I am confident nothing will hold her back. As Senator DeMoose, the keynote speaker, emphasized, "this program is a model for the state". None of this could be accomplished without cooperation and support from members of the community who make the commitment to inspire and mold these young adults. Thank you to all that were involved!

If you have a son or daughter graduating this year in Hayes Township, we would like to honor them in our next issue of the Voice. Please send their name, school, picture, and future plans to treasurer@hayestownshipmi.gov. They are our future and the future is bright.

Warmest Regards,
Ron VanZee

Unprecedented Number of FOIA Requests Create Unexpected Expense

We continue to hear from our residents that Hayes Township's budget is a top spot in their list of issues. This continuing series of articles addresses the workings of Hayes Township and how tax dollars are being used.

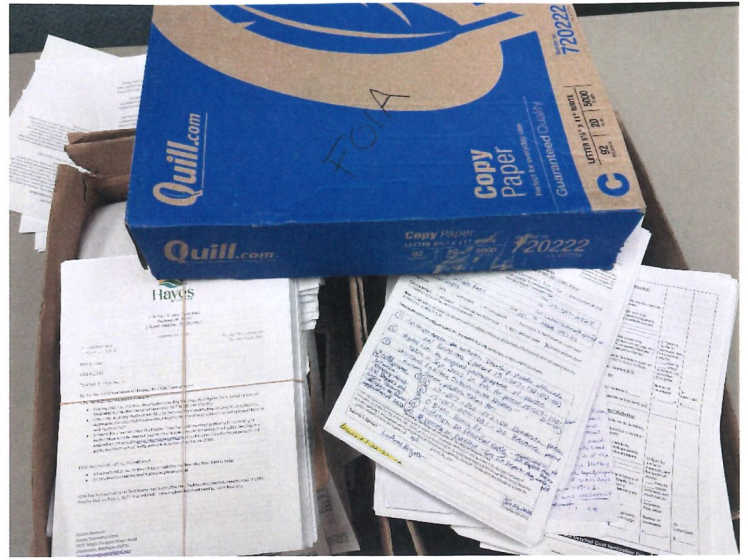
In our previous edition, we explored the excessively high costs of legal expenses that were unanticipated and could not budgeted for in advance. As a recap, that number was in the \$100,000 range for the Township to defend against the continued litigation. This month, we are highlighting a second major unanticipated expense area, FOIA requests.

Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests are permitted under State of Michigan Public Act 442 of 1976.

The state law defines the response process and the timelines mandated for responding to the request. All FOIA requests are logged in and kept by the FOIA coordinator (currently the Township Clerk), who is also responsible for responding to the requests.

Of course, the time it takes to respond to a request varies greatly and in accordance with its scope. Typically, a FOIA request requires the coordinator to contact Township Board members (Trustees and/or Planning Commission) as well as pulling records and files from the archives. Sometimes, the Township attorney needs to be contacted for guidance on the appropriate materials to be provided.

The Township can charge only a nominal fee for the actual paper copies requested, which does not include the staff



"It is the public policy of this state that all persons, except those persons incarcerated in state or local correctional facilities, are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees, consistent with this act. The people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process."

time required to find, print, and collate the materials. That time is reflected separately on the fee sheet. However, after everything has been compiled and hours spent, the requestor can withdraw the request, sending staff on a wild goose chase with unbillable hours wasted; transferring the cost to the taxpayers.

FOIA requests are often filed in disputes, either between neighbors or with the township. In the past, there were a handful of FOIA requests filed, but this has changed dramatically in recent years.

One individual, however, has filed over 200 FOIA requests. Her requests alone fill four banker boxes with documents that have taken countless hours for

staff to provide. In comparison, over the past three years around 7 FOIA requests have been submitted, total. The other 'flavor' of FOIA is when a bulk election FOIA is sent to all municipalities, which there has been 3 or 4 requests.

Even with this egregious amount of requests, Hayes Township continues to follow their statutory obligation respond to FOIA requests to the best of its ability, in accordance with its statutory obligations and policy of making information readily available to its residents. Transparency is being open, honest, and accountable, thereby facilitating the sharing of valid information, and being open about how officials use resources and respond to public needs.

Yet it is a claim of a "lack of transparency" that is used as justification for this huge number of FOIA requests. Our performance in meeting these requests has been exemplary and each Board of Trustees meeting offers residents the most up-to-date information on Hayes Township activities. The claim is not only demonstrably untrue but also speaks to the intentions of the accusers themselves.

Just because someone does not agree with the decisions that are being made does NOT equate to a lack of transparency.

Thank you to Dave from Sandtastic for the wonderful job he did cleaning the sand at our treasure that is Eastern Avenue Beach!

Did you know that they (Sandtastic) donate the fall beach clean-up every season? Our local vendors are very appreciated.



Undine Cemetery Update

At the April Board of Trustee meeting, the Board approved a proposal from Trimedia Environmental Engineering, a Native American owned small business, to update all records and create a public website database of the plots in Undine Cemetery. They will be converting all paper maps of plot into a digital map with any records that exist. They will also



incorporate a headstone inventory map with pictures and scan the entire cemetery with ground penetrating radar to confirm burials and identify potential unmarked burials. A drone survey will be performed to create a high-quality aerial photo to be used as a background for the cemetery map.

This exciting work will be completed within the next few months. The link to the public website will be on our Township website, and will also be published as an app to use on smart-phones. Our Sexton and Cemetery Committee are determined to make sure each grave, marked and unmarked, is marked and honored, both for that individual and for their family members. They have also been working with a local Veteran group and making sure all Military members in Undine are appropriately marked with the American Flag.

Hayes Township Calendar

May 2024

Thursday, May 2nd
Community Coffee, 1pm

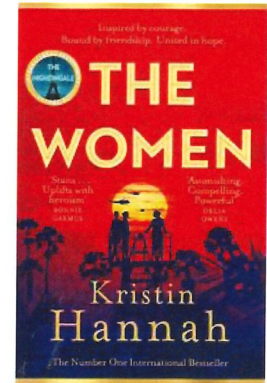
Thursday, May 9th
Parks and Recreation
6pm (at Camp Sea Gull)

Monday, May 13th
Board of Trustee Meeting,
7pm

Thursday, May 16th
Book Club, 1pm

Tuesday, May 21st
Planning Commission

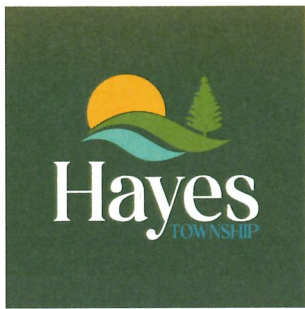
*All events are held at the
Hayes Township Hall unless
otherwise noted.*



May Book Club Pick!

The Women by Kristen Hannah

To get more information
or be added to our Book
Club e-mail list,
please contact Clerk
Kristin Baranski at
(231)547-6961



VOICE VIEWS

CONNECTING
OUR
COMMUNITY

Hayes Township Hall
9195 Major Douglas Sloan Rd.
Charlevoix, MI 49720
(231)547-6961

For the most up to date information,
Visit:
Hayestownshipmi.gov

HAYES TOWNSHIP

Spring 2024 Clean Up

SATURDAY, JUNE 15



****Limit of 2 yards per household (size of 8-foot truck bed)**

Please do NOT put out: Electronics, old TV's, shingles, any fluids, tires, concrete/bricks, or hazardous materials

Okay to put out: Mattresses (CANNOT BE WET, limit 4 per household), carpet (must be cut and bound in 3-foot sections, old couch (must be cut in 3- foot sections), appliances (freon needs to be removed from fridges), burn barrels (must be emptied of all debris)

Please have all items out to your curb for pick up by: **6am on June 15th**

If you have any questions, please email treasurer@hayestownship.gov
or call the Hayes Township Office at (231)547-6961

Michigan Township Association Yearly Conference

As part of their continuing education, our Clerk Kristin Baranski, Deputy Clerk April Hilton, and Treasurer Julie Collard, attended the MTA 2024 Conference, held at the Grand Traverse Resort conference center. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and talk with other officials, Michigan Township Association representatives, as well as many different vendors and professionals. They brought back literature from EGLE, Waste Management, and several other Michigan contractors and companies. Especially interesting was a surface that could be used in parks as a path (made from recycled tires and other materials) that allowed water to flow freely through. The Grant, Michigan company is Porous Pave and the representatives were very helpful in providing hands on examples of their environmentally friendly product.

There were numerous and interesting educational sessions offered, from B,S,& A Best Practices (which was an excellent preparation for the new Township accounting software) to Managing Public Meetings and Public Safety Priorities. There are also several sessions they will be viewing online that were presented concurrently during the conference.

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