

Wakefield Township

414 N. County 519

PO Box 164

Wakefield, MI 49968

Volume 20 Issue 1

July 2020



Manabezho Falls on the Presque Isle River

Supervisor:

John Cox
906 224-3721
PO Box 164

supervisor@wakefieldtownship.com

Clerk:

Mandy Lake
906 364-0669
PO Box 164
clerk@wakefieldtownship.com

Treasurer:

Joan Dalman
906 224-8201
906 364-1742
PO Box 191
treasurer@wakefieldtownship.com

Trustees:

Jerry Niemi
906 229-5553
trustee2@wakefieldtownship.com

Jim Spencer
906 224-6649
trustee1@wakefieldtownship.com

Custodian:

Robert Drier
906 224-2751

Wakefield Township Board Meetings: Dates and Times

Meetings are at 5:30PM on the first Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted.

Resuming meetings July 7, 2020 **Wednesday, November 4, 2020**

July 7, 2020

August 4, 2020

September 1, 2020

October 6, 2020



December 1, 2020

January 5, 2021

February 2, 2021

March 2, 2021

Master plan complete (public hearing coming soon)



Wakefield Township has engaged the services of WUPPDR (Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region) who has developed a master plan for our township. This plan has been overseen by our Planning Commission and Township Board to chart the future of our township. There will be a public hearing sometime in July. Approval will follow after that.

The full master plan and amended zoning ordinance is available on our website.

Items that are included in the plan include:

- Community profile of socioeconomic and demographic data, infrastructure, community facilities, utilities, natural resources, climate, recreation assets, major employers, and other assets and indicators that may be deemed appropriate.
- Goals, objectives, and strategies
- Land use plan and zoning plan
- Current and future land use maps and maps roads/streets and water bodies
- Community characteristics using data available from WUPPDR's database or other free public data sources

The efforts of the Planning Commission, Board and the workers and volunteers that made this happen are greatly appreciated.

ZONING

Some areas of our current zoning ordinance need to be changed, namely a container ordinance added, CRZ-1 and LIZ-1 zones eliminated-which will make 3 zones industrial, residential and natural resources. Our attorney is completing work on this, and this will be out for public review at a public hearing as soon as his work is finished.

Burn Barrels, Burn Permits, and Spring Cleanup

NO SPRING CLEANUP, BUT WESTERN U.P. RECYCLING IS OPEN for metals, junk vehicles, etc on (CALL 906-224-5150 for prices and items not allowed) BURN BARRELS, BURN PERMITS -There are no formal written permits required for open burning, but you should check out the MDNR website to see if burning restrictions are in force www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/

or call 906-353-6651 or 866-922-2876. The categories are NO BURNING, BURNING AFTER 6:00 PM. AND BURNING ALL DAY. If burning is permitted it is recommended that you call the Sheriff's office and let them know what and where you are burning. We have a lot of visitors who report flames and smoke when in fact it is legal burning. This wastes the resources of our fire department and law enforcement.

The state law allows you to use burn barrels for items like paper, brush and wood, but you may not burn household waste that contains plastic, rubber, foam, chemically treated wood, textiles, electronics, chemicals, or hazardous materials. Please use common sense when you burn, and if you have a neighbor close by, please cooperate with them by selecting a time to burn. The township has not adopted an ordinance banning burn barrels, has no plans to do so, but be aware that the Michigan DNR can enforce the law concerning burning and banned substances.

Blighted Properties and Building permits

Wakefield Township blight enforcement is done by the Supervisor. Donald Saari and the Supervisor share Zoning Administrator duties. Donald is also our long

time building inspector. We also would like to remind those who are building or adding on to their existing homes to call the Clerk 364-0669 or visit our website for a permit application and to contact Donald Saari. Our permits are the most reasonably priced in the state and we are asking for your compliance in this matter as well. Failure to obtain a permit may result in enforcement of our zoning ordinance which authorizes up to a \$100 per day fine for not obtaining one. If you have not done a spring cleanup around your property, everyone encourages you to so. We want to keep our township looking good for ourselves, our neighbors and visitors. Although spring cleanup has been cancelled or postponed you can still get rid of liter and junk a little a time in your weekly garbage or dumpsters are available from the Gogebic Range Solid Waste Authority. As usual we will take enforcement action of our ordinances if necessary



Finances and Goals

The township sets the budget priorities based on our goals. Here is a list of our goals for 2020-21 that was developed in January 2021.

HIGH FOCUS GOAL- EXPANDED INTERNET SERVICE

- Phase I – (Summer 2020) -Internet Tower at Wakefield Township Hall capable of reaching out from Hopkins Rd to N519, then north through the Thomaston neighborhoods making service and Broadband available to more residents.
- Phase II—(Summer 2021) - Internet Service expansion in the Southern and Eastern ends of the township. (Subject to funding)
- Phase III--- (Summer 2021-22) Provide office space for lease in the upper floor of Township Hall so that companies and individuals can live and work remotely.

CONTINUING AND COMPLETION GOALS

- Continue to provide support to all current and future businesses in Wakefield Township

- Devote township funds and work as partners with the Gogebic County Road Commission to continue road projects throughout the township
- Complete work on Master Plan for the township.
- Blacktop west area of the township hall parking lot.

Financial Health

Our unaudited fund balance as of 3-31-20 was \$ 549,000 with revenues of \$224,000 and expenditures of \$272,000. Since our revenue increased this year due to the expansions of Northern Natural Gas and Extreme Tool, the Board chose to fund projects namely internet improvements, township hall improvements and our partnership with the Gogebic County Road Commission to fix local roads. We are using some of our projected fund balance to make this happen.

The Board continues to take measures to hold the line on increasing costs such as removing street lights where there are unoccupied houses and roads; reducing the township hall utility expenditures by using advance technology to reduce utility expenditures; and installing energy efficient windows, doors and insulation. In addition, the Board has held the line on salaries and eliminated benefits for several years for all Board Members.

Assessments and Board of Review Date

The July Board of Review will meet on Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 5 p.m. in the Wakefield Township Hall. This meeting is for errors and omissions, principal resident exemption and to consider poverty exemptions.

As we stated last year, the State Tax Commission is requiring that local governments reassess at least 20% of the property in their jurisdiction each year. Therefore, this year, Wakefield Township complied again; by completing the assessments on all parts of the township. Our assessor is Melissa Prisbe and if you have any questions about your property assessment please call her at 906-364-2910. If you are planning to build and are wondering approximately how much your tax will be, she can help you with that important information or you can visit our website and link to the State of Michigan Property tax calculator.

website

We encourage everyone to view our website. This was very helpful during this Corona Virus 19 pandemic in getting information to you. It is constantly updated with information important to living in our township. You can find applications for building permits, absentee voter forms, phone numbers, zoning ordinances, economic development information, links to businesses in Wakefield Township, recreational sites, a calendar of events, meeting minutes, some nice pictures of our area and township demographics. Our web designer and updater is Tom Ruppe who is doing a fantastic job. Our website address is www.wakefieldtownship.com

PARKING LOT BLACK TOP

The parking lot project at the township hall to the west of the building has been completed. The cost was \$9000.



Roads

This past winter season again did a lot of damage to our township roads and the numerous days of snowplowing cost our Road Commission a lot of money. We had to cut back some of our township funds for roads this summer due to the fact that the Road Commission was not going to do any chip sealing this summer due to the decrease in gasoline tax revenues caused mostly by the COVID 19 pandemic. So on the next page is a list of our 2020 summer road projects and if you look closely you will see that the cost of road repairing and rebuilding is not cheap.



Township Share (60%) \$3,600

Broadband Internet

INTERNET TOWER AT THE TOWNSHIP HALL- Internet service (or lack of it) was identified in our Master Plan as a very important service. So the township has partnered with <http://gogebicrange.net/> and they have laid out the 150 foot internet tower at our township hall. Construction has started and is on schedule. Some ordered equipment has been received. The small building is built, and the concrete footings are nearly ready. The project is on schedule with an early completion date of July and a late completion date of December. This tower should reach residents along County Rd 519 North to approximately Connorville from M-28; it should also reach M-28 to Johnson Rd and everything in between to C.R. 519. The township has contracts with Merit Inc. and Gogebic Range.Net to provide internet service to customers within the tower ranges around our township. For those of you who are using the current broadband service, we hope that your internet service will be vastly improved. However, there are many of us who are close to the internet towers, but cannot receive service due to trees or other blockages. Like most of the U.P. this can be a huge problem based upon where you live. You can call Gogebic Range.Net at 906-842-3394 for more information if you are interested in signing up for this new, improved service.

TOWNSHIP LOCAL MATCH PROGRAM WITH GOGEBIC COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION TOWNSHIP SHARE- 60% ROAD COMMISSION 40%

The cost to Total Patch .24 miles of Niemala Road:
 Estimate Cost \$5,200
 Township Share (60%) \$3,120

The cost to pave culverts on Johnson Road and Hopkins Road:
 Estimate Cost \$6,000

The cost of maintenance to Drier Road:
 Total Patch. \$1,800
 Ditch intersection of 519. \$1,600
 12 inch culvert. \$400
 Install 12 inch culvert, intersection of 519. \$1,600
 Estimate Cost \$5,400
 Township Share (60%) \$3,240

The cost to place HMA millings:
 Thunderbird Lane/culvert patch, .06 miles. \$4,500
 Nurmiko Road, .15 miles: \$11,200
 Estimate Cost \$15,700
 Township Share (60%) \$9,420

The cost to grind and total patch culvert Apache/Indianhead Road.
 Estimate Cost \$1,800
 Township Share (60%) \$1,080

HMA overlay of Production Drive, .1 miles.
 Estimate Cost \$21,000
 Township Share (60%) \$12,600

Cost of maintenance to Puumala Road from Colberg south to end, 2575 feet.
 Replace culvert at Colberg Road. \$1,600
 24 inch culvert. \$800
 Ditch. \$3,200
 Shape with grader. \$1,100
 Gravel 15ft x 4 in \$2,600
 Truck and spread gravel \$7,200
 Estimate Cost \$16,500
 Township Share \$9900

Total Estimated Cost \$71,600
Total Township Share (60%) \$42,900

County roads such as North County Road 519 are the sole responsibility of the Road Commission. They have received two grants for those repairs, but the money was contingent on the copper mine being opened. Since the mine project has been put on hold for the past 12 years, minimal maintenance has been done and the Road Commission and ultimately the township residents and businesses have to bear the burden of traveling on a rough, heavily traveled, narrow road. The Road Commission and township are looking at some funding alternatives, but for now we will have to make do with what we have.

COVID -19 --

I meet on teleconference calls with a number of public officials every Thursday morning. We are fortunate that the virus has not been widespread here in the U.P. If there is anything that isn't covered by the media, and is of importance to our township residents, it will be shared it with you.

TOWNSHIP BOARD AUGUST ELECTION

Incumbent Members including Supervisor John Cox, Treasurer Joan Dalman and Trustee Jim Spencer will not be running. Candidates unopposed are for Supervisor-Mandy Lake; Clerk-Jennifer Ahonen, Treasurer -Denice Laessig; Trustee for 2 positions incumbent Gerald Niemi, Robert Drier and Michael Heikkila. We are fortunate to have such excellent candidates for these positions.

FIRE NUMBER SIGNS

This past winter took a toll on many of township fire number/address signs. I see some in the ditch, some destroyed etc. We are in the process of completing an inventory of them and will order new signs or repair them. It will take at least a month to do it considering the lead time in ordering/making new ones.



CENSUS-

If you have not responded to the census, it is important that you do so. There will be door to door census takers leaving information for you on how to respond. There are some parts of the township's budget and grants that are calculated by population, so we need to stand up and be counted.

APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED FOR PLANNING COMMISSION, BOARD OF REVIEW AND OTHERS

In September, Supervisor John Cox will be recommending appointments to various Boards and Committees. The recommendations will then be forwarded to the township Board for approval. Interested individuals should contact me at 906-224-3721 OR email supervisor@wakefieldtownship.com if you need more information or would like to submit your name for consideration.



Editorial Comment

I hope that you find our newsletters helpful in providing you with information about our township. Our township website is updated very often and is very comprehensive and current. Visit it at www.wakefieldtownship.com

On behalf of our Township Board, we hope that you are doing well during this difficult time for all of us. Township business continues to go on as usual, however we have changed our meeting schedule due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We did not meet in May or June, but kept you updated by posting a monthly update of our activities and all budget items on our website. **We will resume meeting on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at the Wakefield Township Hall, 414 N. County Rd. 519.**



This will be a different July 4th.
Please pray for our country.

Contact Information ---*Clip and Save*

- Assessor - Melissa Prisbe - 906-364-2910
- Blight Officer - Call Supervisor John Cox - 906 224-3721
- Boiler Inspector - (517) 241-9334 (Call State of Michigan office for appointment)
- Building Inspector - Donald Saari - 906-364-1277 (cell) 906-364-1277
- Building permits – Clerk, Mandy Lake - 906-364-0669
- Burn Permits - www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/, or 906-353-6651
- Electrical Inspector - Steve Bachelor - 906 295-1355, W4398 County Rd. 388, Powers, MI 49874
- Garbage collection – Gogebic Range Solid Waste Authority at 906-932-0600 or the clerk at 906-364-0669. Monday is collection day.
- Indianhead Subdivision Sewer Hookups - Paula Koruga - 906-224-1092
- Plumbing Inspector - Ken Raupp (906) 280-3906
- Power and Street Lighting - Xcel Energy Outage-**800-895-1999**. Street Light Outage www.xcelenergy.com/ODL/OUTAGEREPORT or call-**800-628-2121**. If you prefer, you can call the supervisor at 906-224-3721.
- Road Commission - 906-667-0233
- Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control - Jim Finley - 906-663-4512
- Wakefield Public Library ([free to township residents](#)) - 906-224-5236
- Website and Facebook-www.wakefieldtownship.com
- Western U.P. Health Department (Well and Septic Permits) Phone: 906-667-0200
- Zoning Administrator - Donald Saari - 906-364-1277 or call John Cox 906-224-3721

WAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP TAXPAYER:

If you pay your taxes by mail, please enclose payment stub or the real estate index number(s). We are no longer automatically sending a receipt. If you wish to receive a receipt, check the box indicating this on the stub of your tax bill and return it with payment. Payments must be postmarked by September 14, 2020 to avoid penalties.

If you prefer to pay in person, I will be available:

Friday, July 10, 2020 9:00 AM--12:00 PM at the Twp Hall and
12:30 PM—5:00 PM at my home office

Monday, September 14, 2020 9:00 AM—12:00 PM at the Twp Hall and
12:30 PM—5:00 PM at my home office (**last day before penalties are added**)

You may pay your taxes at my home office anytime that I am available. Call first: 224-8201

Joan Dalman, Treasurer