



# TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERVISOR

Don Ulsh (dulsh@schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)

Your township board feels that one of its main responsibilities is maintaining the lifestyle Schoolcraft Township residents enjoy. Thus, we are again discussing the idea of becoming a Charter Township.

We feel that Schoolcraft Township has reached the population threshold that warrants this effort. In 2020 this concept was turned down by the voters because residents were concerned about the township increasing taxes. I want to reassure residents that we do not need to increase taxes. What we levy now is sufficient to cover our needs. There are 6 Charter Townships in Kalamazoo County and none of them increased their tax levy when they became a Charter Township. Along with other benefits, becoming a Charter Township can help provide additional protection for warding off annexation efforts by bordering entities (cities and villages).

To the right you will find a list of all the townships and what their populations are via the 2020 census:

Careful thought is going into the discussions about becoming a Charter Township. Previous annexation of approximately 600 acres of land from Schoolcraft Township, a recent W.E. Upjohn Institute study showing that there will likely be a need for 7,750 new housing units by 2030 in Kalamazoo County and the fact that surrounding communities are now almost completely built-out has prompted our discussions regarding this topic. Your Township Board would like to have your input on this topic. Please visit our website ([www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](http://www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)) and click on the Charter Township survey or use the QR code to provide your opinion.

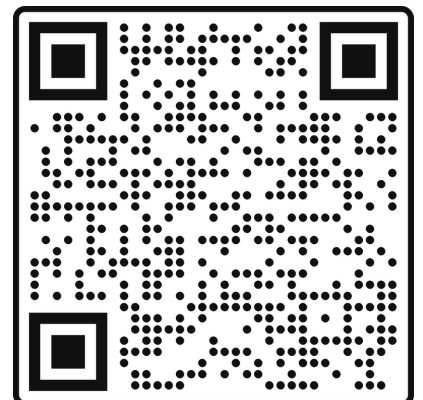
### CHARTER

Oshtemo - 23,747  
Kalamazoo - 22,777  
Texas - 17,691  
Comstock - 15,231  
Cooper - 10,418  
Pavilion - 6,387

### GENERAL LAW

Schoolcraft - 9,183  
Richland - 8,693  
Ross - 4,851  
Brady - 4,445  
Alamo - 3,805  
Prairie Ronde - 2,369  
Climax - 2,364  
Charleston - 1,904  
Wakeshma - 1,241

Scan me for the  
Charter Township survey.



# DO I LIVE IN A TOWNSHIP? WHAT DO TOWNSHIPS DO AND HOW DO THEY WORK?

Steve Fryling - Schoolcraft Township Trustee  
(sfryling@schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)

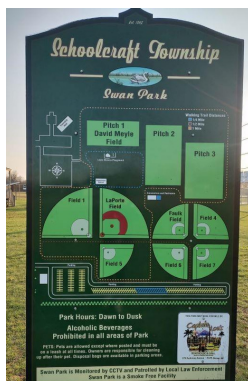
Township officials get these kinds of questions often, from folks of all ages and backgrounds, so here is a quick rundown of what townships are all about.

Unless you live in a city with a charter (like Portage or Kalamazoo) you are a citizen of a township. If you live in a village you have “dual citizenship” meaning you are the citizen of a township AND the village where you live. It also means you pay property taxes for both and can run for and elect village and township office holders. Schoolcraft is rather unique in that it has two villages (Vicksburg and Schoolcraft) that are mostly within the boundaries of the township. Most townships have no villages and a smaller number have one village. There are over 1200 townships in the state. By population, Schoolcraft Township is within the top ten percent of townships, with over 9183 people, according to the 2020 census.

General law townships, like ours, are the most common kind and can levy a property tax of no more than one mill. Currently Schoolcraft Township levies .85 mills. This means for every \$100,000 in taxable value you would pay \$85 towards township services. So, what might you get for those dollars?

According to the state constitution and laws, townships are, at their most basic level, responsible for three duties: assessing property values, collecting property taxes for the county and the state and holding elections. Beyond that, all townships are what is known as “Mother may I” governments, in that they cannot do anything unless expressly allowed by state law. Schoolcraft Township also performs many other services for its citizens including maintenance of cemeteries, fire protection, upkeep of most township roads, ordinance and zoning enforcement, township record keeping, and building code and permit enforcement. The township also owns and operates a very busy public park, complete with multiple ball fields and public amenities.

Township government in a general law township like ours is conducted by a five-member board, elected every presidential election year. The officers include a township supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and two trustees. In Schoolcraft Township, the supervisor, clerk and treasurer are salaried and have specific duties to perform, while the two trustees are not salaried and have the duty of attending board meetings, voting, as well as general oversight of township operations. Each member has a vote at the township board meetings. For more specifics on the duties and particulars of each office, check out our website at [www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](http://www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)



# A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

Teresa Scott (tscott@schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)

*An original tax bill is sent to every taxpayer even if your taxes are paid by your mortgage company. Please read your bill carefully as it contains a lot of important information such as: due dates; office hours and holiday closings; requests made for your tax information by a mortgage company; the State Equalized Value and Taxable Value for the current tax year. The Tax Schedule for 2023 property tax year is:*

- 2023 Summer & Village of Schoolcraft tax bills mailed on or about July 1, 2023
- 2023 Summer & Village of Schoolcraft tax bill **due date: September 14, 2023** (postmarks accepted)
- 2023 Winter tax bills mailed on or about December 1, 2023
- 2023 Winter tax bill **due date: February 14, 2024** (postmarks accepted)
- **Last day** 2023 taxes can be paid to Schoolcraft Township: **February 29, 2024** (postmarks **NOT** accepted)

If you do not receive your tax bill, please contact our office. Not receiving your tax bill does not relieve you from the obligation of paying the tax or any interest and penalties, if applicable. It is your responsibility to inform our office of any changes or corrections to your mailing address. There is a form available on our website for mailing address changes.

As a service to our taxpayers, real-time Tax and Assessing information is accessible free of charge on our website ([www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](http://www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)). You can print information for current year and previous year taxes. The databases are searchable by parcel #, name, or property address.



## A Few Other Things to Note:

Partial payments can be made any time there is an outstanding tax amount due to Schoolcraft Township.

Credit card/electronic payments **cannot** be made at the Township office or over the phone. This option is only available online using the Township website. The online payment service provider charges a convenience fee to use this option. For a complete explanation see the "Payment Option" information on the Treasurer's page on our website.

Please do not staple your check to the remittance stub when sending/bringing them to the Township. The staples are often hard to remove and the checks can be damaged.

If you desire a receipt, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or a legible email address with your payment.

If you are paying after the due date, please contact the Treasurer to get the proper payment amount.

When paying your taxes in cash, it is helpful if you bring exact change.

## Curious about where your tax dollars go?

Head to [www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](http://www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov) and navigate to the Treasurer's page. There you will find summer, winter and Village of Schoolcraft property tax information sheets that detail when each millage was created, when it expires, and what it's used for. These information sheets provide information about the tax due dates for each bill. We have also recently added charts that show how much of your taxes are allocated to each of the taxing entities. Those charts can be found on our website, [www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](http://www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov). Navigate to 'Resources', then 'Where Do My Taxes Go?'



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CLERK

Virginia Mongreig (vmongreig@schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)

### Voting Locations

The change in precinct locations has continued to be a problem for some voters. When the precincts were changed in 2021 everyone was mailed a new Voter ID Card which included your precinct location. If you live in the Schoolcraft Community Schools District, you vote at the Schoolcraft Township Hall. If you live in the Vicksburg Community School District, you vote at the Vicksburg United Methodist Church. Please understand there are legal reasons for the voting locations selected. If you are still unsure of your voting location, please visit Michigan Secretary of State or schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov, where you will find answers to all of your voting questions.

**Proposal 2**, which passed with 60% of the vote in the November 8, 2022 election made changes to the state constitution, with nine days of early in-person voting being the biggest. At this time there are many unknowns for clerks who are awaiting implementation direction from the state legislature. Of course, we will forward information as it becomes available and ask that you direct any questions to your township clerk. One change that has already been implemented is the Absentee Voter Application process. Every voter currently in the Schoolcraft Township Absentee Qualified Voter file will receive an application for an Absentee Ballot. Once an application is completed, checking the box in the top right corner will make it so that you automatically receive an Absentee Ballot for every election moving forward while you reside in the state of Michigan, and you will no longer need to complete an application. (see example below)

### See other side for additional instructions

#### Future elections



I want to vote absentee in all future elections. Automatically send me an absent voter ballot for every election.



See reverse side for additional instructions and warnings.

## Tires, Tires Everywhere!!!!

Virginia Mongreig - Township Clerk

For the past year or so while taking a relaxing summer evening drive I'm certain most of you have come upon piles of discarded tires. Why, oh Why, oh Why? Rather than pay to discard the tires properly, they are not only dumping the tires, but dumping the costs on to the taxpayers of our Township. I hope you all join in to help us catch the culprit. Shout out to resident Kim Wilcox and Jeff Bozell of Eagle Auto Parts, and other good Samaritans who have helped!

Schoolcraft Township is once again joining the Kalamazoo County Conservation Office in offering no-cost tire recycling. This year it will take place Thursday, July 13, 2023 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. To register for this event go to [www.kalamazooconservation.org](http://www.kalamazooconservation.org). The previous events throughout Kalamazoo County have been very successful.

Please show respect to our Township by ending all littering. We have a beautiful township. Let's keep it that way.



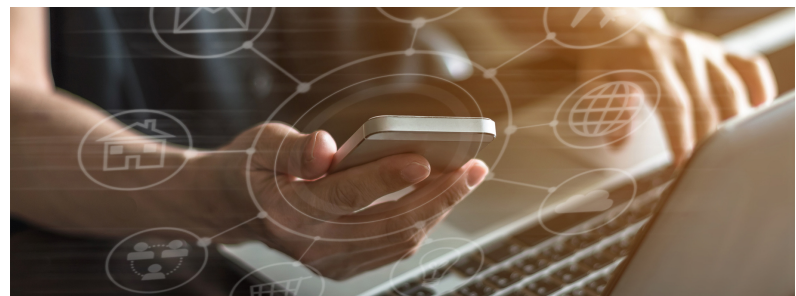
# SCHOOLCRAFT TOWNSHIP AND THE AGE OF THE INTERNET

Steve Fryling - Schoolcraft Township Trustee

Township government goes back to the time before Michigan became a state in 1837, but Schoolcraft Township is working to keep up with using today's technology to communicate and serve the community. We have built a large and very "handy" website at [www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](http://www.schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov) to help people get what they need faster and often without a trip to the township office or having to reach someone by phone. Using our website here a few things you can do:

1. Find out about upcoming meetings and events
2. Register to vote or find out where to vote
3. Look up tax records
4. Pay property taxes online
5. Look up township board minutes
6. Get the documents and agenda for an upcoming board meeting (a few days before the meeting)
7. Get a link to attend board meetings using ZOOM
8. Look up ordinances, zoning maps and planning documents
9. Get information about township cemeteries
10. Find ways to contact township officials
11. Find out about the actions of the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Planning Commission
12. Get links to other connected services (County Road Commission, Hazardous Waste Disposal, County Government and Sheriff's department and many more).

While you can still use the "old fashioned" ways of communication and information, this gives folks a time and labor-saving way to get things done.



## Cemeteries in the township

Virginia Mongreig - Township Clerk

Let's talk cemeteries! Schoolcraft Township is home to three historic cemeteries.

The Gourdneck Prairie Cemetery next to the Webber School House is on land offered by the Frakes Family of Vicksburg.

Schoolcraft Cemetery at the corner of VW Avenue (Lyons Street), and U.S. 131 is the resting place to many settlers of the prairie and loved ones laid to rest as families travelled to the new frontier, along with generations of Schoolcraft Township families.

Highway Street in the Village of Vicksburg is the third of the Schoolcraft Township cemeteries. With a walk through the North Cemetery, you will recognize the names of early settlers of whom the streets throughout the Village of Vicksburg are named. On the East side of the entrance to the South Cemetery is the Veteran's Memorial which was rededicated on Memorial Day 2012.

We hope that you will all follow the rules set in place for memorials at the gravesites of your loved ones. Please remember to plant live flowers, no silk or plastic flowers, no extra memorials other than the headstones. The Township will remove unsightly and artificial decorations. As many folks continue to place "fake" flowers, please remember to show respect to other families that stand by the rules.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year Schoolcraft Township spent \$118,997.20 on cemetery related expenses. Please take care to follow rules in order to keep these costs down.

# Schoolcraft Township Newsletter Summer 2023

[schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](http://schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov)

## Schoolcraft Township

Swan Park

50 E VW Avenue

Vicksburg, MI 49097

269-649-1276

Supervisor - Don Ulsh

Clerk - Virginia Mongreig

Treasurer - Teresa Scott

Trustees - Steve Fryling

Tamra Stafford

Assessor - Nathan Brousseau

### TOWNSHIP OFFICE HOURS

MON-THUR 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m

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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Tamra Stafford - Schoolcraft Township Trustee

([tstafford@schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov](mailto:tstafford@schoolcrafttownshipmi.gov))

As a Township Trustee, I believe it is important for everyone to be able to voice their concerns about township business. The Township board is committed to serving the residents of Schoolcraft Township.

In 2022 the Township received money from the federal government as part of the Covid relief package. We refer to these funds as ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) funds. Information is enclosed with this newsletter about the ARPA funds and includes a three-question survey for township residents to voice their opinions on how they would like the funds spent.

The survey is also available on the Township website or by scanning the QR code. I would encourage everyone to take the survey so we can use the money for things that you want accomplished within our community.

I would also encourage you to come to our meetings which occur on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 PM. These meetings are open to the public, and a Zoom link is available for anyone who wishes to attend virtually. All meeting notices (including Zoom links) and agendas are posted on the Schoolcraft Township website.

**Scan me for the ARPA survey.**

