

From the Desk of Audrey Nevins-Weiss

As we begin 2016 I look forward to another exciting year for Byron Township residents.

SpartanNash merger, Tanger Outlet Mall, and Inglass kept us very busy last year, and bringing 1500 jobs to Byron Township was very rewarding.

If you have not had a chance to visit the new dog park at Whistlestop Park, please feel free to use the park this winter. We will have an official grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony in the spring. Pet Smart and Pet Supplies Plus will be giving away a free gift to the first 50 dogs. There will be projects for our Eagle Scouts and other interested organizations to supply some platforms and non-skid surface spaces for dogs and their owners. Supplies are already available to clean up after your pets.

Whistlestop Park is well attended and the need for another entrance and exit have been in our long range plans. The Township Board authorized the purchase of property that became available on Byron Center Avenue. This will be a budget item for 2016 – 2017. The drive will also supply the continued bike path that will connect through Whistle stop Park to Douglas Walker Park.

The Byron Township Board at its last meeting approved the 30% match for the TAP Grant for the Kenowa Trail. This trail will begin at Quincy (68th Street) and continue north on Kenowa to 56th St. The Kent County Road Commission will be the Act 51 Agency for administering the grant funds. The deadline to submit the application to the MDOT Grant Coordinator is January 18th, 2016. If the application is awarded for funding the project should be on the schedule for 2017.

Sounds of Summer will be performing concerts again this July in Cutler Park. The concerts were well attended in 2015 and the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended to the Township Board to hold the concerts again in 2016. Details on dates and times will be made available at the Community Center.

The Community Center continues to set new attendance records. Our fastest growing programs are those serving families and seniors. The year 2016 will be the 8th anniversary of the Community Center. The Township Board saved for 10 years before starting construction on the Center. Now 8 years later, we continue to be amazed at the growth of the recreation programs.

Cutlerville Fire Department will receive a new truck. This truck is a collaboration of Kent County, Gaines Township and Byron Township.

In closing, I once again thank you for allowing me to be your Supervisor. Feel free to personally contact me at 878-1222 and I look forward to serving you in the future.

Sincerely, Audrey Nevins Weiss, Byron Township Supervisor

NEW WATER AND WASTEWATER RATES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2016

The Byron-Gaines Utility Authority works very hard to provide clean, safe drinking water and sanitary sewer services as transparent to our customers as possible. You shouldn't have to think about it; that's our job. We do, however, need you to take a moment to think of how much it costs to keep the water flowing and wastewater draining away.

Byron Township's Water & Sewer Department along with Gaines Charter Township Water & Sewer Department faces sizeable expense in providing life-sustaining water and wastewater services. However, the Water & Sewer Department does not receive revenue from property taxes or any other financial support from the Township Government. The Water & Sewer Department is an enterprise fund; an organization that provides goods or services to the public for a fee that makes the entity self-supporting. The total cost of the operations and maintenance of the Water and Sewer Department are financed entirely from user fees – that are paid by you every quarter.

Every year the two Townships review their rates based on the last fiscal year's expenses and local income to make sure they are sufficient to cover the cost of providing services.

Regular rate adjustments are necessary to make sure the rates generate the right amount of revenue and cash flow to provide reliable and sustainable services to the community. The City of Wyoming provides our water and treatment of our wastewater; therefore, rates are also in direct correlation to what Wyoming charges us for the commodity. Rates must keep up with the increasing cost of operations, including increases in electricity, raw materials like fuel and chemicals, insurance and labor, and changing regulatory requirements. Rates must also include depreciation expense and provide funds for emergencies.

On December 14th, 2015, at a regularly scheduled meeting, the Township Board approved the latest rate study and its recommended rates. The "average" residential customer will see a reduction in their bill of approximately \$0.56 per quarter. The new rates are effective January 1st, 2016.

POTABLE WATER RATES

Billed at approximately 92-day intervals, the water rates consist of two separate charges:

Water Ready to Serve Fee ~ based on meter size and applicable to each domestic water meter account regardless of the consumption quantity.

Consumption Charge ~ the charge applicable to each 1,000 gallons of water that passes through the water meter.

WASTEWATER RATES

Just like potable water rates, wastewater rates consist of two separate charges ~ a sewer ready to serve fee based on water meter size and applicable to each account, regardless of the consumption quantity, and a consumption charge applicable to each 1,000 gallons of water that passes through the domestic water meter. There are NO ready to serve fees charged for water or sewer on an irrigation meter nor are there consumption charges for SEWER on an irrigation meter.

Payment Options

We have several different payment options. Of course you are always welcome to step into the Township Treasurers Office and pay in person with cash, check or credit card. We accept Master Card, Visa, and Discover.

Remember you can always pay after hours by using the drop box located by the East entrance. Payment must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the date it is due.

You can find a form on our website for an automatic withdrawal out of your checking or savings account quarterly. There is no charge for this from the township and it is a one time set up for continuous withdrawals on the 20th of the month that your quarterly bill is due. You will still receive a utility bill; however on the bottom left it will say "Auto-Draft Do Not Pay". If you chose to pay it before the 20th that month, it will not be deducted from your account that month.

Also available is a customer initiated debit/credit or checking or savings withdrawal when you receive your bill. On our website: www.byrontownship.org, on the left side you will see "water & sewer". Click on that and you will see a button that says, "Pay Bill". That will guide you through the process of paying that bill only either by debit/credit card or a withdrawal from your checking or savings account. When you use your debit or credit card the merchant will charge approximately 4% in a convenience fee that will be added to your total. For a checking or savings withdrawal, the merchant will charge a nominal fee of \$0.25 to be added to your total amount.

Helpful Hints

We have paperless billing available to you. Email debbie@byrontownship.org and let us know that you would like to set up paperless billing for your quarterly water & sewer utility bill.

Watch for messages on your bills, and glance at the back side of your bill for important information about leaks and penalties. Also located on the back of your bill is a link to view the current Water Quality Report.

Please inform us when you will be gone for an extended period of time as the post office will no longer forward your postcard bill. Sometimes it can take weeks for the postcard to be returned to the Water and Sewer Department, and then placed in an envelope to be mailed out again. This process can result in late fees assessed to your water and sewer account.

Irrigation Meter

If you use a large volume of water for the purpose of sprinkling your lawn and landscaping, you may wish to consider purchasing a second water meter for irrigation before next summer. Remember, additional water use results in additional sewer usage charges as well. With the second meter, you will not be billed for any sewer usage when you irrigate your lawn. For example, if you sprinkled your lawn over a billing period of 3 months using a total of 80,000 gallons, the sewer use charge alone would be about \$200.00. If you had a second meter there would be no sewer use charge.

Most people use more water for sprinkling than they think they do.

Depending on how much you sprinkle, we anticipate that you will be able to save money on your water and sewer bill during the sprinkling season and recoup your initial investment over a 2-3 year period.

The actual meter and inside plumbing inspection would cost approximately \$625.00. The actual plumbing work costs will depend on the complexities of your plumbing system and the plumber who does the work. We don't require that you hire a licensed plumber, as long as the plumbing is set up properly.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to call us at (616) 878-0660 or visit our website at www.byrontownship.org and click on water & sewer.

Clerk's Corner
Joel H. Hondorp, Clerk

With only a couple elections in 2015, the Clerk's Office had a little more time to focus on other tasks and begin preparing for 2016. One change this year will be for voters in Precinct 3. Precinct 3 will be moving to the Cutlerville Fire Station. (Voters in Precinct 3 formerly voted at Legacy School.) All other voters will cast their ballots at their usual polling location.

Presidential Primary

For the Presidential Primary, there will be two ballots available – Republican or Democrat. On your application to vote, you must choose which ballot you would like to vote.

Absentee Voting

Please call my office at 878-9104 if you have the desire to vote absentee and fit the following qualifications: 60 years or older, absent from the community on Election Day, physically unable to attend the polls, prohibited from attending due to religious beliefs, in jail awaiting arraignment or trial, or working as a precinct inspector on Election Day. You can also download a form from our website or the Secretary of State's Website.

2016 Election Schedule

March 8 – Presidential Primary Election

August 2 – Primary Election

November 8 – General Election

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

11 Township Board
 18 Planning Commission
 25 Township Board

FEBRUARY

8 Township Board
 15 Planning Commission
 22 Township Board
 24 Board of Appeals

MARCH

14 Township Board
 21 Planning Commission
 23 Board of Appeals
 28 Township Board

APRIL

11 Township Board
 18 Planning Commission
 25 Township Board
 27 Board of Appeals

Happy New Year and welcome to our Michigan Wonderland.

The winter statements were mailed in December and are due by 5pm on Monday, February 15, 2016. Payments can be made in person, by mail, or on our website at byrontownship.org. We accept late payments at the township until Monday, February 29, 2016. If payment in full is not possible, partial payments are accepted. Interest and penalty is applied only to the unpaid balance. On March 1, unpaid taxes are turned over to Kent County for collection and additional fees will be applied. Delinquent personal property taxes remain at the township for collection. ALL BUSINESS OWNERS: Make sure to complete your personal property statements as well as the exemption forms. You may be eligible to have your personal property taxes waived or exempted. If you have questions on the forms, you may call the Assessing Office at 878-6033

Dog licenses are now available in our office all year and can be purchased for 1 year or 3 years depending on the rabies expiration date. The license is due the same month as the rabies vaccination was given. Remember to bring in your letter from Kent County, if you received one, proof of rabies vaccine and proof of altering.

If you ever have any questions, you may stop in or call 878-3196 and Jacki or I will be happy to help you.

**Byron Township Recreation
 Department & Community Center**

This past year the Byron Township Recreation Department was busy adding new programs and updating our park facilities. We've added lacrosse, pickleball, new art classes, intro to lpad classes and more.

At the Community Center we've added open pickleball opportunities and continue to offer our popular Toddler Rec gym time, fitness classes, enrichment classes and more. We also offer daily, monthly and annual passes to our gymnasium and fitness center. We have something for people of all ages and areas of interest, so please give us a call or check out our brochure on our website to find something that fits what you're looking for.

For more information please check out our website

www.byrontownshiprecreation.org. Like us on Facebook to get up to date information.

Byron Township Recreation *
 2120 76th Street * Byron Center, MI 49315
 Phone: 616-878-1998 * Fax: 616-583-1220 *
www.byrontownshiprecreation.org

Hours of Operation:

M-F: 6am-9pm
 Sat: 8am-5pm
 Sun: Closed