

TREASURER

DEPUTY TREASURER

Terrie Smith Ext. 112

Tina Barker Ext. 101

Welcome to the First Ever Tax Season with Covid-19!

Following are a few suggestions to keep yourself safe and contact free while paying taxes.

1. Mail your taxes in.
2. Contact your bank and set up a payment through bill pay. (Usually no charge.)
3. Drop your payment in the drop box right beside the Township front door.
4. Use our new drive-up drop box by the flag pole across from the Township Hall.
5. Set up an e-check payment through govpaynow.com. (\$2.95 fee)
The Township code is : PLC a002xj
6. Pay using your credit card at govpaynow.com. (2.65% fee) (Bills up to \$31 have a \$1.00 fee.)

BUT I WANT A RECEIPT!

Return your **whole tax bill with your payment** when paying by mail or using the drop box at the Township Hall. Be sure to **enclose a self addressed, stamped envelope** and we will send the stamped, paid receipt back to you. You are still welcome to pay in person, however, until all regulations have been lifted, we will request social distancing.

When paying taxes by mail or using bill pay, please schedule your payment 7 days before the due date. **DO NOT** put them in the mail the day before or day of. They will not arrive on time. Use our drop box or come in person to avoid the late fee beginning Sept. 15th. If they arrive late, you will be receiving a letter for late fees. Please double check your check before mailing it to make sure both the numbers and the written amount are correct. **Put your phone number on your check so we can contact you if your payment is incorrect.** Any overpayments under \$5.00 will not be refunded.

SUMMER DEFERMENTS

Applications are accepted beginning July 1st through September 14th by 5:00 p.m. Applications will be available on the township website and in the treasurer's office. **You MUST bring in a copy of your 2019 Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit with your application and your household income MUST be below \$40,000.**

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

John Baumann Ext. 103

Assessment Change Notices were mailed in February. These notices are sent to inform property owners of the new current year (2020) Assessed Value (AV), State Equalized Value (SEV) and Taxable Value (TV). They also indicate any changes that may have occurred to the property due to transfers of ownership, PRE (principal residence exemption) changes. It is important that you review these notices to make sure that they correctly reflect this information as well as your mailing address. Please pay close attention to the PRE %. Your summer tax bill will be incorrect if the PRE is incorrect. On the notice you should also see that the inflation rate modifier used for calculating the Taxable Value for 2020 is 1.019. This figure is mandated by the State Tax Commission to be applied to all properties in the State not just Lincoln Township. Visit the **Lincoln Township Website** at <http://lctberrien.org/> and click on the Assessing department link for more information on the assessment process and related assessing forms. The State Tax Commission requires assessors to **annually inspect** a percentage of properties in each class. This summer and fall you may see me in your neighborhood reviewing properties and updating photos of property improvements. I am looking for changes to the property and verifying that all of my information is updated and accurate. I will be traveling in a marked Lincoln Township vehicle and will be wearing ID tags. If I stop at your house I will knock on the front door and/or leave a tag so that you know I was there. These inspections are necessary in order to maintain accurate property data. It is this data, combined with the sales studies that are used to develop fair and accurate assessed values. In the Assessing Department there are property record cards on file for every parcel in the Township. You are always welcome and encouraged to come in and review your **property record card(s)**. These record cards can also be viewed on the Lincoln Township Website at <http://lctberrien.org/>. If you review your record card and find any discrepancies please contact me at 269-429-1589 x103 or jbaumann@lctberrien.org.

RECREATIONAL PARKS & BEACHES

Terrie Smith Ext. 112

Regrettably, the parks department does not have wonderful news to report at this time. We have been informed that our revenue sharing could drop by fifty percent due to Covid-19 and the failing economy. Eighty-four percent of our income to run the township comes from our revenue sharing. Unfortunately, our parks are not supported through millage dollars. Instead, money to run our parks is received from the township's general fund. Money budgeted to the park's department for the 2020 year is on hold for all major projects due to the revenue cuts. Making matters even worse, we lost the spring income from the cancellation of spring sport groups due to the pandemic. We also know that many of you have been looking forward to the spray park. We received all the fixtures late last fall and we were hoping to have it up and running this summer. However, the money that we allotted to construct the water and sewer connections and the dollars to put in the concrete pad and walkways are being halted at this time. The board is being very conservative about spending funds unnecessarily on extras and saving the money for necessities. For those of you who enjoy watching the beautiful sunsets of Lake Michigan are unable to watch them at the Lincoln Township Beach this year. The beach has been closed since last fall due to the massive amount of erosion that has occurred with the high winds and forceful waves. The beachfront continues to be eaten away and numerous dangerous particles have been exposed or have washed up on the shore. On the bright side, you will still be able to enjoy the sunsets from Glenlord Beach that was reconstructed last year. Please be patient with the township as we try to ride out this high rolling rollercoaster that we all have been riding on since March. We hope that all of you are staying safe and protecting your family through this pandemic. As we financially gain strength, we will begin to work on our parks again. We will be maintaining all of the parks, just not adding new and better fixtures.

**Summer Taxes
Are Due SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2020
AT 5:00 P.M.
Postmark is NOT
counted as the
payment date!**

July 2020 Issue 82

2055 West John Beers Road
P.O. Box 279
Stevensville, MI 49127-0279
Phone: 429-1589
Fax: 429-0880

www.lctberrien.org

OFFICE HOURS

9AM to 5PM

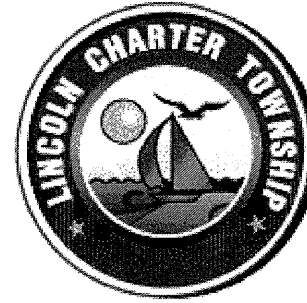
Monday thru Friday

You can obtain the minutes for meetings, public notices, building permit applications and other helpful materials our website.

Lincoln Charter Township
2055 W John Beers
PO Box 279
Stevensville, MI 49127

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
STEVENSVILLE, MI
PERMIT NO. 279

ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER



LINCOLN CHARTER TOWNSHIP COMMUNICATOR

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

Dick Stauffer Ext. 104

Road Projects for 2020

Our subdivision and local road maintenance program continues this year thanks to your road millage support. This year we're resealing the following subdivision roads: Morton Lane, Orchard Lane, Maple Lane, Advance Way, Perry Dr, Jacob Tr, Lara Lane, Oak Lane, Winding Lane, Drexel Place, and Deerwood Trail.

In addition we will be sharing equally, with the Berrien County Road Department, the cost of applying a leveling course of asphalt and seal coating to Linco Rd. from Totzke Rd. to Stevensville-Baroda Rd.

In addition, the Berrien County Road Department is planning to apply trap rock to 1.3 miles of Cleveland Ave. from Linco to the baseball field. There is also miscellaneous work planned on .75 miles of Marquette Woods Rd. from Roosevelt Rd. to Cleveland Ave.

Roosevelt Rd. Non-Motorized Pedestrian Pathway Update

With shelter at home we have seen an increase in residents of all ages taking advantage of the Township's non-motorized paths and sidewalks! MDOT has just announced that bids for the S. Roosevelt Rd. non-motorized trail project from Hidden Pines Trail to Marquette Woods Rd. project will be opened on July 10, 2020. Work on the installation of a retaining wall, elevated boardwalks and a pedestrian bridge over Hickory Creek is tentatively planned to take place between October 2020 and March 2021, with final completion of the complete trail before Memorial Day, 2021. A specific schedule will be provided after the bids have been received in July at which time the Township will work with local residents to begin planning for the project and inform the general public on the planned activities.

Protect our Water:

Help protect Michigan's waters and wildlife by reporting any type of water pollution to the Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS). PEAS HOTLINE: 1-800-292-4706 (except for immediate and obvious threats to public safety call 911)

Examples of pollutants to report that need to be cleaned up: Suspicious discharges from pipes, soil from construction sites entering waterways or drains, & paint or oil poured down a drain leaky septic systems.

Sewer Backups: Make us your first call if you have a sewer backup. We will check the main line, which may save you from having to call a plumber. If available, we can print you a copy of your sewer line & clean outs. After hours call 983-7141 and dial 1 for the operator. *Please call at anytime if you notice the red light on at any of our lift stations.*

HOLIDAY CLOSED DATES

- July 3.....Independence Day
- Sept 7.....Labor Day
- Nov 26 & 27.....Thanksgiving
- Dec 23, 24 & 25.....Christmas
- Dec 31.....closed at NOON

Board of Trustees: Meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00PM in regular session. Special meetings are held as posted.

Our website has been update. We invite you to check it out at lctberrien.org Also you can find us on Facebook.

The Berrien County Road Department can be reached at bcroad.org

TOWNSHIP CLERK**Stacy Loar-Porter Ext. 108****DEPUTY CLERK**

Kalla Langston Ext. 102

VOTER REGISTRATION

Julie Amicarelli Ext. 100

Upcoming Elections:**Tuesday, August 4, 2020 Primary Election**

Monday, July 20, 2020- Last day to register in any manner other than in-person with the local clerk

The August State Primary will require voters to vote within the Republican Party or Democratic Party on the Partisan Section of the ballot.

This election is a State Primary Election. The ballot will include, but will not be limited to; Township Offices, County Offices, County Proposals, US Senator and Representatives, State Representative, Precinct Delegates and the following township proposals:

Police Operating Millage

Shall the Charter Township of Lincoln Levy 1.50 mills (\$ 1.50 per \$1,000 of taxable value) on the real and personal property subject to taxation, for a period of eight (8) years commencing in 2020 through 2027, inclusive, for the purpose of funding the operations of the Township's Police Department, raising an estimated \$1,066,140 in the first year the millage is levied?

Fire Department Operating Millage

Shall the Charter Township of Lincoln Levy .50 mills (\$.50 per \$1,000 of taxable value) on the real and personal property subject to taxation, for a period of eight (8) years commencing in 2020 through 2027, inclusive, for the purpose of funding the operations of the Township's Fire Department, raising an estimated \$355,380 in the first year the millage is levied?

Fire Department Asset Millage Renewal

The following ballot language for the Fire Capital Asset Millage Renewal (the "Ballot Language") is hereby approved: Shall the expired previous voted increase in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution in Lincoln Charter Township, of .175 mills (\$.175 per \$1,000 of taxable value) and reduced to .1747 mills (\$.1747 per \$1,000 of taxable value) by the required millage rollbacks, be renewed at .175 mills (\$.175 per \$1,000 of taxable value) and levied for eight years, 2020 through 2027 inclusive, for the purpose of funding the acquisition of capital assets for the Township's Fire Department such as a fire truck, raising an estimated \$124,383.00 in the first year the millage is levied?

Tuesday, November 3, 2020 General Election

Monday, October 19, 2020 Last day to register in any manner other than in-person with the local clerk

In-Person Voting

In person voting will look a bit different this year. We will have election workers to help guide you through the process. There will be safety measures in place to ensure that both workers and voters health is protected during the election process. Please remember to be patient if there are lines on election day.

Precinct Location Changes

We had a few location changes due to COVID-19, please make sure you review your precinct location.

PRECINCT LOCATIONS**Precinct 1** – Municipal Building, 2055 West John Beers Rd.**Precinct 2** – Lakeshore Christian Church, 5565 Washington Ave.**Precinct 3** – Stevensville American Legion, 3039 Johnson Rd.**Precinct 4** – Fire Station, 2130 West John Beers Rd.**Precinct 5** – Anchor Church of God, 5020 Cleveland, Stevensville *******Precinct 6** – Berrien County Baptist Church, 5940 St. Joseph Ave, Stevensville ******Lincoln Charter Police Department Chief of Police: Gary Soper 429-2444**

The Lincoln Charter Township Police Department would like to take this opportunity to express the continued support from the citizens of Lincoln Charter Township and the Village of Stevensville.

We would like to take this time to remind our citizens of the numerous tax fraud and identity theft scams that go on during tax season. The Lincoln Township Police Department would like to remind you that the police department, the sheriff's office and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will never solicit you for your personal bank or social security information over the phone or by email. They will also not request that you obtain money by gift cards or wire transfer to take care of any outstanding debts or warrants. If you receive any type of this information, and you are not sure the information is legitimate, please contact the Lincoln Township Police Department at 269-429-2444 to verify before sending or wiring any money.

The Lincoln Township Police Department would also like to remind our citizens that with summer season here., we encourage everyone to make sure that your vehicles are locked and valuables are not left in your motor vehicle. Please, call immediately if you see any type of suspicious activity.

Once again, the Lincoln Township Police Department would like to express our appreciation for all our support from the citizens of Lincoln Township and the Village of Stevensville

BUILDING OFFICIAL-ZONING ADMINISTRATOR**James Pheifer Ext. 105****PLANNING & ZONING**

Judy Dunlap Ext.107

Tony Riegel is the Building Inspector registered with the State of MI.

Rod Wilder is the Mechanical Inspector registered with the State of MI.

John Maier is the Plumbing Inspector registered with the State of MI.

Ken Simpson is the Electrical Inspector registered with the State of MI.

Ralph Bansen is a part-time Rental Inspector as well as being an Enforcement Officer.

Josh Quandt is a part-time Rental Inspector as well as being an Enforcement Officer.

Ryan Venno is a part-time Business License Inspector as well as being an Enforcement Officer.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION PLEASE READ

The following is a list of Lincoln Charter Township Ordinances that seem to be a problem every year. These ordinances, if not followed could result in a fine.

- Grass and weeds shall be maintained and cannot exceed **six (6) inches** in height.
- Litter and Debris is not allowed and must be removed from your yard.
- Parking on lawns or road right of ways are prohibited; all motor vehicles in residential districts are to be parked in a driveway with an improved surface. (Concrete/Asphalt)
- Boats, motorhomes, camping trailers, box/flatbed trailers and unlicensed or unregistered vehicles are not allowed to be parked in front yards, they are however allowed to be parked in one side yard or in a back yard and must be stored or parked on an improved surface, (concrete/asphalt). Trucks exceeding one and one half (1-1/2) tons, are not allowed to be parked or stored in residential districts.
- Sale of vehicles is permitted but limited to twenty-one (21) days for two (2) such displays in a twelve (12) month period. The vehicle must be parked in a driveway and not displayed in the road right of way or in a yard.
Please if you have any questions regarding Ordinances or Codes call the Department of Building Safety. James Pheifer at (269)429-1589 ext. 105 or Judy Dunlap (269)429-1589 ext. 107.

Zoning Board of Appeals

In 2019, the ZBA heard 0 petitions for Variance. An interpretation (or variance) request may only go to the ZBA after the project has been denied by the Department of Building Safety due to conflicts with the Zoning Ordinance. A petitioner must file the request three weeks before a scheduled ZBA meeting. The ZBA normally meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

In 2019, the Planning Commission held 10 regular meetings, 2 public hearings, 0 joint meetings, 0 special meetings, and 2 cancelled meetings. The PC normally meets the first Monday of each month **2019 Permit Report.**

In 2019, the Department of Building Safety (DBS) issued permits for the following projects:

18 Single family residences: 4 Condos (single family attached); Average size 2,299 square feet; Average construction value \$306,144.00

1 commercial foundation; 8 commercial additions, alterations, repairs; 2 commercial, new buildings; 5 demolition permits; 160 electrical permits; 46 fence permits; 1 attached garage; 1 detached garage; 1 Industrial add, alter repair; 285 mechanical permits; 6 new mobile home installations; 66 plumbing permits; 1 pole barn; 115 residential additions, alterations, repairs; 10 residential decks; 5 residential utility buildings; 2 residential foundations; 123 roof permits; 5 commercial sign permits; 1 development sign; 1 above ground swimming pool; 4 in-ground pool permits; 38 water/sewer permits.

LINCOLN CHARTER TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT Chief: Brandon Chiarello Ext. 114

The Lincoln Township Fire Department would like to thank the citizens of Lincoln Township and the Village of Stevensville for their continued support. We would like to remind everyone to check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for proper operation and change the batteries at least twice a year. An easy way to remember to do this is to change the batteries when you change your clocks to adjust for daylight savings time. Also smoke detectors do not last forever; they should be replaced every 10 years. We are still performing free smoke detector and battery replacement. Contact the station to schedule: 269-428-2385. With summer just around the corner please remember that only naturally occurring vegetation on your property may be burned, no man made, or construction materials are allowed to be burned. Burning must be attended to at all times, and always be courteous to your neighbors while burning. Burn permits are required and can be obtained at lctberrien.org under Burn Permits. Our department is presently made up of two fulltime firefighters and 13 paid on-call firefighters. We are always looking to add to our roster, if you are a certified firefighter and live in Stevensville or Lincoln Township please stop by and pick up an application. Applications are available at the Township Hall or you may stop in and see us at the Fire Station during normal business hours. As the weather begins to warm up our firefighters will once again be out inspecting and servicing fire hydrants. Thank you again for your continued support and please check our Facebook page for updates and other useful information. The Lincoln Township Firefighters would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy summer.

Fire Department Levy Can Cut Home Insurance Premiums.

Our fire department consists of Chief Brandon Chiarello and full-time Firefighter Jeremiah Koch plus 15 on-call firefighters who are paid hourly for calls and training.

Over the past three years firefighters averaged 276 calls, including vehicle accidents, illegal burning, hazmat calls, structure fires, vehicle fires, and many others.

Chief Chiarello and Firefighter Koch are now Fire Inspector 1 Certified which permits them to perform commercial building safety inspections. That makes our buildings safer for the owners and for all of us. The two did 207 inspections and 123 re-inspections in 2019. Also, in partnership with the American Red Cross, our firefighters installed 86 smoke detectors in homes and replaced 135 batteries free of charge. Their watchword is "the best fire is one that never happens".

There are two fire levies on the upcoming ballot each designed to provide equipment that expands the department's capabilities and reduce overall operating costs. Air packs (to safely enter a burning building) are near the end of their 15-year life. New tools to extract people from a vehicle accident are also needed. We want to replace a 25-year-old pumper AND a 15-year old rescue truck, with a new Rescue/Pumper truck reducing total vehicle costs as well as maintenance and operation.

A new 0.5-mil fire operations millage covers daily firehouse operations, including maintenance of existing equipment and supplies. The 0.175-mil renewal is for the capital equipment cited above to expand capability and generate cost savings.

They now have a new fire tower to train to fight multi-story structure fires. Completed training will give the township an ISO-3 level rating, which typically permits the lowest fire insurance rates. That gives you, and the entire township, an opportunity to lower your home insurance premiums to the lowest available in the county.

An average Lincoln Township home with a taxable value of \$99,750 (\$199,500 market value) at 0.675-mil total would pay \$67.50 annually - about \$5.65 per month. We fully expect some of that monthly cost would be offset by the ISO-3 home insurance premium reduction.

Again, there never is a good time to increase taxes, but a trained and fully equipped fire department is not something to put off until "a better time".

Our emergency responders deserve the support needed to do the best job they can - and so do you. Please vote.

If you have any questions please contact Chief Chiarello 269-428-2385 Township Supervisor Dick Stauffer 269-429-1589 ext. 104.



Township Demographics Have Outgrown Police Department Capacity.

Lincoln Township population is projected to reach nearly 16,000 in the upcoming census. Last census we had 14,691 citizens. If your township were a city, we'd be the largest in Berrien County - 6,000 more people than St. Joseph, 3,000 more than Niles.

To serve a township with 16,000 people, National and State Police guidelines recommend 25 officers. **We have 12.** Despite concerted police department effort and dedication, increased population, new businesses, festivals and growing recreational facilities have created an overwhelming task for officers to be where they are needed.

In the past three years alone, your police department *averaged* more than 5,000 calls per year. Since police work is a 24/7/365 responsibility, our officer count often leads to a coverage challenge, requiring voluntary and non-voluntary overtime.

Our officers patrol 100 road miles in 10-hour shifts, provide support to numerous restaurants and bars, seven Red Arrow hotels and motels and a craft brewery plus our beaches and parks. They are also responsible for the county's most accident-prone stretch of I-94 - from the Exit 22 curve to the Red Arrow Highway overpass at Exit 23.

According to the Berrien County Road Commission, on any given day Lincoln Township has a higher traffic flow than any other jurisdiction.

Our police department has security support for five elementary, two middle schools and Lakeshore High School, and must have a presence at every high school sporting event. More than 40 regularly scheduled public events also need an officer present. This includes the 80-acre, 1,200 parking space, Baseball, Softball, Rocket Football, Soccer and Lacrosse Complex. Soccer alone hosted 1,260 participants (plus family members) last year. Now enlarged, 3,000 participants plus family are expected this year.

We need more officers to strengthen response and maintain event safety.

An officer uses about 40 minutes to settle a standard call for assistance. If the call requires an arrest, the officer must deliver the offender to jail and then stay to file paperwork at the court. That's two more hours he or she is not available in the township to respond to your call. Adding one officer per shift would get us:

1. More officers on the road for a more prompt response to your call.
2. Better overall coverage when one officer is doing required court paperwork.
3. More frequent home vacation sweeps and after-hour business scrutiny.
4. More proactive traffic monitoring to reduce neighborhood speeding.

The proposed millage would add three trained officers, with their needed equipment, and at the same time lower department overtime costs by 50%!

A current 1.5-mil police millage expires in 2023. This request is for 1.5-mils to replace a 0.5-mil assessment that expired last year. The 3.0-mil total will get us the three added officers and put our resident-to-officer ratio in a much better place.

For an average Lincoln Township home with a taxable value of \$99,750 (\$199,500 market value) it would cost \$297 annually - about \$25 a month. There never is a good time to increase taxes, but when you need a police officer to respond to your emergency or to be a welcome presence to maintain order at a community event, \$5 to \$7 per week becomes a solid investment.

If you have any questions contact Chief Soper directly at 269-429-2444 or Township Supervisor Dick Stauffer 269-429-1589 ext. 104.



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