



Town Hall Meeting Held

The first Village of Grass Lake Town Meeting took place at 7 pm on Wednesday, October 25 at the Village Hall; it was publicized online and open to all residents. with a format so that the public can ask questions and receive answers; Public comment in regular Council meetings allows for the public to address Council but does not provide for back and forth discussion.

A prominent item on the agenda was explanation of how the local water sewer system evolved, of how it is managed with State regulations, and of what was behind recent increases in Water and Sewer rates.

The new owners of what formerly was Ryan's Restaurant introduced themselves and shared their plans for the space. News about bringing an eatery to the downtown was greeted with enthusiasm by all at the meeting.

This initial Town Hall received good feedback from attendees. It can become a resource tool for citizens who are curious, are not getting answers from other sources, or have not approached Village officers directly before. Four such meetings are planned for the next calendar year.

Budget Workshop Meetings Commence

The Village Council will conduct four (4) Budget Workshops – open to the public – in addition to regular meetings to finalize a FY 2025 budget for the new year, beginning March 1, 2024. Workshop dates are: November 14 at 7 pm, November 21 at 6 PM, December 5, at 6 pm, and January 16, 2024 at 6 pm.

Policies Adopted

The Village Council has adopted a series of Fund Balance policies to guide management of those funds that factor into rate increases and service fees charged. With the accepted, best practice in place, the aim of fund solvency should reduce need for large increases.

Village Purchases a Backhoe Loader

The Village Department of Public Works (DPW) crew will be operating a safe, new, Michigan CAT Backhoe Loader, with options customized for the Village's specific needs. It replaces a piece of equipment that served the Village well past its life expectancy and fortunately

was traded in as part of the sale.

For several budget years now, the Village has set aside monies toward future equipment purchases; in this case, a reasonable downpayment amount was made with finance of the rest at an attractive interest rate.

Reported at Meetings

Water and Sewer News

The Village has entered into a Water Tank Management Contract with USG Water Solutions. This will bring many cost-savings benefits to the Village regarding necessary projects requiring engineering, upfront renovation of the interior and exterior of the water tower and its care and maintenance. The agreement brings additional expertise in to address state regulations and requirements for water purity.

The Village of Grass Lake owns and maintains a sewer system that was installed in 1996. Since then, the Village and Township have connected more Residential Equivalent Units (REUs) to the system than it was originally built for, without completing upgrades to handle additional capacity. Because the Village is staged for redevelopment and the Township for new development, more REUs would be added to the system. Before permits can be issued, the system needs to be certified for those requested additional connections.

The Village engaged Holland Engineering to conduct an evaluation of the Village sewer system performance and to assess present and future needs. This study is funded jointly by both Village and Township governments.

DDA in Action

Allot of work goes on behind the scenes in support of business returning to Grass Lake's downtown. At the Town Hall meeting, the new owners of Prat's Place (Ryan's Restaurant) acknowledged the help given them by

DDA Executive Director Muszynski. She is a resource for the soon-to-open Cattleman's Coffee and Provisions, and has been actively encouraging additional, new ventures in the business downtown.

Commentary

Most Grass Lakers offer their time and efforts readily. As recipients of untold, selfless acts, we can be grateful for those willing, behind-the-scenes workers. But it happens that organizing a big community event year after year, can become too much for the same someone. More citizen participation is needed so that beloved events remain on the calendar for group enjoyment. Our Grass Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce has already been working toward a solution – encouraging more residents to get involved, fostering better communication and initiating more advance planning – so that, “all things work together for good....” For instance, recently, Sklar Harris offered to help. She is an able event organizer; her ideas are on display for Halloween activities at the Pavilion, and she is part of a committee that came together to make this year's “Festival of Lights,” happen on December 2 (first Saturday in December). The Chamber has a calendar of events for 2024 on its new website, and is focused on activities that showcase downtown business and commercial opportunities available in Grass Lake. Consider attending a Chamber Board meeting (2nd Thursday of the month, @ 8:00 am at the Village Hall) to share your ideas and support for Grass Lake. — JF

(More news)

At the County Park in Grass Lake

Residents have already noticed the addition of a sturdy dock at the Grass Lake County Park boat ramp area. Council was advised that the County Parks Department plans to re-grade the boat parking area; it is scheduled for this fall.

Is the Village involved in this County park's management? No. But our DPW has naturally assisted the Parks Department as needed.

Through taxes, Township and Village residents fund a Parks millage to pay for the Jackson County Parks Department's (JCDP) county-wide operations (2023 marks year # 5 of a 10-year commitment). Do contact JCDP directly with your questions or concerns.



Aggressive aquatic Invasive found in MICHIGAN

Grass Lake is already being treated for specific invasives that will not go away. Now Hydrilla has been detected in Michigan and it has several ways of reproducing, allowing it to spread rapidly, outcompete native plants and quickly form dense single-species infestations. Root tubers, turions (buds) and even small plant fragments can develop into new plants, making it very easy for hydrilla to disperse through water or attach to ornamental plants sold for water gardens. Please be aware of transporting potentially-present plant materials to any Michigan lake via live tanks or on boat hulls.

Meetings Scheduled

GOVERNMENT

November 2, 7:30 pm: Planning Commission Regular Meeting, Village Hall

November 7, Election Day: Village Office Closed and Village Council Regular Meeting, cancelled.

November 13, 6:30 pm: Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Regular Meeting, Village Hall

November 14, 6:30 pm: Grass Lake Charter Township Regular Meeting, Township Hall

November 14, 7:00 pm: Village Council Budget Workshop #1, Township Hall

November 21, 6:00 pm: Village Council Budget Workshop #2, Village Hall

November 21, 7:00 pm: Village Council Regular Meeting, Village Hall

COMMUNITY

November 9, 8:00 am: Grass Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce Board, Village Hall

It will snow in the Village this winter.

Check the sticker on your utilities bill that reminds property owners of their responsibility to clear sidewalk areas within 24 hours when snowfall accumulates – 1" or more. And do consider helping neighbors who are not so able to take care of theirs; otherwise, and to keep the sidewalks safe, the village can remove that snow, but then, must bill the property owner the cost, plus an additional \$50. (General Tile IX Chapter 92.41)

Coming in December

The Middle School Choir concert:

Wednesday December 13th at 6:00 pm in the High School Auditorium.

High School Choir AND Band concert:

Friday, December 15th at 6:00 pm

Halloween Night Fun

From 6-8 pm at: the Historic Depot; at the Pavilion (from 5 pm); and the Lost Railway Museum. Open to all, and thanks to volunteer efforts by the Chamber and non-profit orgs.

Leaf Pick-up has begun

Check out the Village on Facebook: www.facebook.com/VillageofGrassLake

FUNDdays

at the Copper Nail

Check Facebook for notices of these earmarked days that combine buying what you like at the shop, plus support for service organizations in our community.

Reminder:

'Shake' your mailbox

It's that time of year for residents to prepare mailboxes for winter by tightening screws and ensuring the post and receptacle are secure enough to endure large amounts of thrown snow. If the mailbox moves when shaken, it may not withstand standard snow removal operations and should be repaired or replaced before winter. Road agencies have never assumed responsibility for mailbox damage caused by snow thrown when clearing the roadway.

Replacements

Disbursements reviews at each Council meeting include Consumers Energy invoices for maintenance of the Village's street lights. The energy company's policy is to replace burned out incandescent light bulbs with LEDs because that lighting uses less energy; lower energy usage translates to cost-savings for the Village. Views about LED vs incandescent light bulbs can spark conversations, but in this instance, the Village intends to maintain good lighting while remaining alert for ways to minimize light pollution so that ours is a sustainable, healthy environment with excellent, night sky viewing.

Food for thought...

Politeness ... is a technique. It's etiquette. ...Civility, by contrast, is a disposition of the heart, a way of seeing others as our moral equals." – Alexandra Hudson