



## *Leoni Township Newsletter-Spring 2024*

**New Fire Truck Ordered:** The Township Board of Trustees, in September, approved the purchase of a new fire engine with Marijuana Excise Tax Funds. The truck was purchased from Rosenbauer Fire Apparatus at a cost of \$842,576. Leoni purchased its last fire engine in 2017, after going 30-years without purchasing an engine prior to that. This fire engine will be available when the 2017 truck is in for service and/or repair and will assist Leoni Township in setting up an equipment replacement plan, so that we are not replacing equipment on an emergency basis, when the truck is no longer serviceable. The Township Board of Trustees feels that Marijuana Excise Tax Funds should benefit all residents of Leoni Township and not just one group, such as paving a specific road or supplementing just those residents that have sewer service.

**Road Replacement:** In the early 1900's, roads were planned, built, and maintained at the Township level of government. Residents recognized the inefficiency and lack of coordinated planning that occurred by handling roads at the Township level. To overcome these inefficiencies and lack of coordinated planning, all roads were turned over to County Road Commissions. Townships do not receive any funding for roads. Those funds go to the County of Jackson. As stated in our last newsletter, Leoni Township only keeps, on average, about \$225 of your tax dollars each year. This is not enough money to provide general township services, including police and fire protection, and fix and replace roads. The only real options to have roads replaced are either through a special assessment district, where the property owners on the roadway pay the cost or through a Township dedicated millage to pay the County of Jackson to replace all our secondary roads. As you know, a millage request was on the ballot recently and that request failed. Use of marijuana money is not a viable option, as it would take several years of funds to just fix one mile of roadway and would only benefit the residents on that mile of roadway. Using those funds for other improvements, such as the new fire engine, or to increase recreational opportunities benefits all residents and not just a few.

**Environmental Protection Agency Grant:** We recently received a grant worth \$3.5 million dollars from the Environmental Protection Agency to be used for improvements at our wastewater treatment plant. The grant will be used to replace aging equipment, such as a front-end loader, and dump truck, along with an addition to the bio-solids holding building and improvements to the roadway and other parts of the plant. The grant will also fund the installation of flow meters, which will assist Leoni Township in determining areas where inflow and infiltration are a problem and is required by the State of Michigan to comply with our permits. The receipt of this grant will assist in keeping sewer rates from increasing to fund these required projects.

**Sewer Infrastructure Replacement:** We are currently upgrading two of our sewer system lift stations, on Napoleon Road and on Brill's Lake Road with federal grant funds, separate from the EPA grant mentioned above. These funds total approximately \$1.4 million dollars and would have had to been funded by Leoni sewer customers, had this grant not been received. Every dollar in grant funding we receive for these projects is a dollar saved by the Leoni sewer customer.

**Sewer Rates:** As sewer customers most likely know, sewer rates have increased dramatically, due to the necessity of funding the replacement of our aging infrastructure, specific to Leoni Township and not affiliated with the treatment plant. We had anticipated future yearly increases to fund these replacements, but it appears that we will be able to keep the rate the same in the 2024-2025 budget year and we will continue to look at grants and other funding solutions moving forward in hopes of not having to increase rates in the near term.

**Township Park-Land Purchase:** In December of 2023, the Leoni Township Board of Trustees purchased over 50-acres of land on Round Lake from the Polish Falcons for \$780,000, to be paid for in installments from current and future marijuana funds. The plan for this property is to have a township park that offers swimming, kayak rental, little league team playing fields, event rental and hopefully much more. The Board of Trustees is currently in the planning stage of the process and hopes that this development will be

something that can be enjoyed by current and future generations of residents. If you have any questions or ideas on this project, please reach out to our Township Manager, Mike Jester, at (517) 936-2307.

**Financial Stability:** We recently completed our yearly state required financial audit of Township finances. The Township is in good financial standing, as the Board of Trustees continues to safeguard your tax dollars. Marijuana revenue to the Township has helped in purchasing items such as the new fire engine and the land for the new township park, without having to use general fund tax revenue, which is used for general township operations. Whether you are for or against marijuana sales, the revenue from such has and continues to allow us to make improvements to the services we offer our residents, whether it be updating fire equipment or improved recreational opportunities.

**Early Voting:** In November of 2022, Michigan voters approved a constitutional amendment that gives voters the right to vote early and in-person. Early voting is open for nine (9) days, beginning on the second Saturday before the election and ending the Sunday before statewide and federal elections. Polls will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, except on Thursday, when the hours will be noon to 8 p.m. The early voting locations for Jackson County are as follows:

Summit Township  
2121 Ferguson Road  
Jackson, Michigan 49203

Blackman Township  
1996 West Parnall Road  
Jackson, Michigan 49201

**Meeting Schedule:** The Leoni Township Board of Trustees meets twice per month. With one meeting structured as a work session, while the second meeting is the Board of Trustees meeting, where voting and other business is conducted. For meeting dates and times, please log on to [www.leonitownship.com](http://www.leonitownship.com).

**Summer Nights in the Park:** If you are interested in a fun evening at the Township Park on 5<sup>th</sup> Street, please consider attending one of the 2024 Summer Nights in the Park Events, which includes live music and food vendors. These events will take place from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the following dates:

May 30, 2024  
July 11, 2024  
August 22, 2024

June 13, 2024  
July 25, 2024

June 27, 2024  
August 8, 2024

**Election Workers:** If you are interested in working as a Township Election Worker, please contact Clerk Cindy Norris at (517) 764-4694. We are always looking for interested individuals willing to help us make our elections run as smooth as possible.

**Tire Collection Day:** The Township will be hosting Tire Collection Day on April 26<sup>th</sup> and April 27<sup>th</sup>. We will be accepting passenger and light duty truck tires at no cost to residents. We cannot accept motorcycle or heavy truck tires or tires still mounted on the rim. This service is only available for private individuals. Businesses are not eligible for this program, per the program requirements.

The Leoni Township Board of Trustees would like to thank the residents and property owners of Leoni Township for the opportunity to serve them. The current Board of Trustees is dedicated to providing services in the most efficient and effective manner possible. It is a pleasure to serve you.

Supervisor Howard Linnabary  
Trustee Jerry Cox

Clerk Cindy Norris  
Trustee Matthew Horning  
Trustee Mike Hill

Treasurer Marcia King  
Trustee Ron Kinch