

Board of Trustees
Leelanau Township
Leelanau County, Michigan

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2020 -2021

*The Township Board of Trustees Annual Report to the citizens and
property taxpayers of Leelanau Township, Leelanau County, Michigan*

John Sanders
Township Supervisor

April 1, 2021

Table of Contents

Who We Are	2
Profile of Leelanau Township.....	5
Where We Are.....	6
Accomplishments Attributed to Policy, Management, and Operations.....	7
Accomplishments Attributed to Capital Spending.....	8
Community Services Reports.....	8
Where We Are Going.....	11
Communications & Transparency.....	11
Goals & Objectives.....	13
Budget Summary.....	14
Capital Plan/Facilities Improvement Fund.....	16

Who We Are

Township Officers

Monica Diaz	Township Clerk
Denise Dunn	Township Treasurer
Gina Harder	Township Trustee
Georgie Murray	Township Trustee
John Sanders	Township Supervisor

Township Personnel

Hugh Cook	Chief of Emergency Services
Cora Schaeff	Township Librarian
Elena Gaspari	Assistant Librarian
Mary Crowgey	Youth Services Librarian
Jolisa Ugalde	Assistant Township Clerk
Jessica Hedgcock	Assistant Township Treasurer
Steve Patmore	Zoning Administrator
Christy Brow	Township Assessor
Denise Dunn	Assistant Assessor
Ben Purdy	Facilities Manager
Tom Wetherbee	Woolsey Airport Manager
Monica Diaz	Cemetery Sexton
Gary Fredrickson	Park Maintenance
Ed Kolarik	Custodian
John Hedgcock	Airport Maintenance
Michael Mahney	Seasonal/Mowing
Willard Kolarik	Park Maintenance

Planning Commission

(Staggered, three-year terms beginning July 1)

Gina Harder, Township Trustee

Steve Kalchik, Chair (2022)

Clinton Sampson (2022)

Brian Mitchell (2021)

Karen Mulvahill (2021)

Phyllis Rebori (2021)

Vacant (2023)

Zoning Board of Appeals

(Three-year terms)

John Sanders Township Board Representative

Steve Kalchik Planning Commission Representative

Marsha Buehler (2023) At-Large Appointee

Bill Crowgey (2023) At-Large Appointee

Vacant At-Large Appointee

Parks & Recreation Committee

(Undetermined terms)

Georgie Murray, Township Trustee

Paul Rebori, Committee Chair

Sharon Golm

Marsha Beuhler

Rob Shirkey

Bill Crowgey

Ben Purdy, Staff Representative

Board of Review

(Two-year terms beginning July 1 of even-numbered years)

Kathy Garthe, Chair (2022)

Dennis Armbruster (2022)

Vacant (2022)

Northport/Leelanau Township Utilities Authority (NLTUA)

(Two-year terms beginning January 1 of odd-numbered years)

Tom Gremel Village Representative

Chris Holton Village At-Large Representative

John Sanders Township Representative

Robert Featherly Township At-Large Representative

Tim Overdier Joint Appointee

PROFILE OF LEELANAU TOWNSHIP

Data presented are close approximations.

Leelanau Township has the third highest, taxable, real estate valuation of the eleven Townships in Leelanau County. Leland Township is the highest, and Glen Arbor Township is the second highest.

Pending the 2020 Census results, Leelanau Township is the fourth most populous Township in the county behind Bingham, Suttons Bay, and Leland Townships

Population

Township Population:	1,500
Northport Village Population:	525
Total Population:	2,025* (2018)
Northport Public School Enrollment:	140
Senior Citizens Over Age 60:	1608 (79% of resident population)
Number of Registered Voters:	2,225*
Votes cast November 3, 2020:	1,773 (79.69%) Leelanau County (79.48%)

Land

Total Township Acreage:	31,488
Leelanau State Park Land:	1,300
Leelanau Conservancy Land:	462
Private Conservation Easements:	2,356
Leelanau Township Park Land:	257
Village of Northport Park Land:	71
Northport Public School Land:	20
Agricultural Land including wetland & woods:	7,200+
Miles of Shoreline, exclusive of Fox Islands:	38.5

Roads

Road miles maintained by Leelanau County Road Commission: 106.1

Road miles maintained by Village of Northport: 8.22

Private road miles are unknown.

*Inconsistency reflects the 2018 census count, which contrasts with the COVID-19 induced population movements in 2020 when itinerant residents were eligible to vote in Leelanau Township.

Where We Are

A Review of Leelanau Township Activities for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2021

Dual Board Responsibilities

It is deserving and appropriate to acknowledge and thank Supervisor Doug Scripps, Trustee Gary Fredrickson, and Trustee Galen Leighton for their many years of service to the people of Leelanau Township and, in particular, for their contributions toward the achievements of the last year.

The new Board Members were elected and sworn into office in November 2020. Thus, the activities of the previous fiscal year reflect shared management roles between the previous and new members.

The newly elected Township Board Members are appreciative of the work and dedication of the prior Board.

The Impact of COVID-19

The Township is the beneficiary of new technology and equipment acquired as a result of a CARES Act grant awarded in December 2020 by Leelanau County. The equipment had a significant impact, since it immediately resulted in improved communications, public access, and meeting management. We've only been able to use this equipment for a couple of months, so we're still getting used to it; but certainly, after several months of challenges associated with public meetings during the COVID-19 era, we are pleased to be experiencing a much better operation.

The constraints attributed to social distancing, public gatherings, and public health concerns have made it difficult for public officials to have the benefit of regular and routine meetings and conversations with the public.

One particularly troubling consequence of the COVID-19 era has been the necessity of having to close the Township offices and the Fire Hall to the walk-in public during much of the year. In addition, the Township staff has been functioning on a limited basis with staggered office time. It has been unfortunate and frustrating, but we have followed the best public health guidelines while continuing to do the people's business under constraints and difficult circumstances.

We eagerly look forward to the return of public engagements and the opportunity to meet with the citizens of the Township once this ravaging disease is past, and socializing with family, friends, and neighbors is once again a normal occurrence.

We ask Township residents to stay safe, stay masked, and stay distanced while COVID-19 remains an active pandemic threat to the population of our nation. Although restrictions have loosened, they will remain in effect for the foreseeable future.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Elections

- The August primary election and the November Presidential election yielded a 79% voter turnout and an unprecedented number of mail-in ballots, which were handled without incident.
- Two Millage referenda were approved by voters to support Emergency Services and maintain financial solvency for the Township.

Ordinances

- A short-term rental ordinance was adopted.
- The Nuisance Lighting ordinance was updated to support the local Dark Skies initiative.
- Sewer fees were increased by \$27.00 per quarter on 94 Township residents to help resolve a shortfall in sewer bond finances.
- A six-month moratorium on new zoning applications within the resort district was implemented.

Personnel

- A three-year contract was signed with the Fire Hall employee union.
- Cora Schaeff was hired as the new Township Librarian.
- The first of four new EMTs was hired to increase trained professional staff on each shift at the Emergency Service Department.

Capital

- A Dog Park within the Village of Northport was authorized.
- Exterior lights on Township buildings were changed to satisfy Dark Sky standards.
- Machin Engineering provided a topographical profile of Christmas Cove Township Park.
- Machin Engineering provided a structural evaluation of the Woolsey Airport Terminal.

Technology

- The CARES Act provided funding for the Township to acquire technology to improve the quality of virtual Township meetings beginning in January 2021.
- The Township telecommunications provider changed from AT&T to Charter/Spectrum.
- Purchased color/copier scanner with wireless printing capabilities Township Hall
- Purchased high-capacity printer for Assessor and Treasurer's offices

ACCOMPLISHMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO CAPITAL SPENDING

The Township accomplished the following:

- purchased a new fire truck for delivery in the summer of 2021;
- replaced the roof on the Fire Hall;
- made repairs and built new interior walls at the Fire Hall;
- replaced the stairs leading to the beach at Peterson Park;
- installed a state-of-the-art composting toilet at Peterson Park; and
- added two miles of asphalt shoulder on each side of County Road 629 to enhance public safety for walkers and cyclists approaching and departing Leelanau State Park. The Township shared the costs with the County Road Commission, three cycling clubs, and the Leelanau Township Community Foundation.

COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORTS

The Planning Commission

Steve Patmore, Township Zoning Administrator

2020 was an unusual year for the Township due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the associated restrictions on activities, meetings, and gatherings. Several Planning Commission meetings were cancelled due to the restrictions, and several were held via electronic remote access after the Michigan Open Meetings Act was amended in September 2020 to formally allow for meetings by electronic remote access. The Planning Commission met nine times in 2020, including a joint meeting with the Leelanau Township Board.

The Planning Commission projects included review, discussion, and consideration of an Application for a Special Land Use Permit for Timber Shores RV Resort. The application was determined to be incomplete and was returned for lack of details. Work continues on the Trunkline Private Event Facility regarding a request to allow campsites and cabins in the Agricultural District. Also pending is an amendment to the Sign Standards Ordinance to comply with a U.S. Supreme Court ruling. The Township's draft rests with the County Planning Commission for review and comment prior to a final submission to the Township Board of Trustees for adoption.

The Planning Commission recommended, and the Township Board approved, an amendment to the Township Nuisance Ordinance to update outdoor lighting standards to meet Dark Sky Provisions.

Emergency Services

Hugh Cook, Chief

We thank the residents of the Township for approving a millage increase to insure the delivery of quality emergency services for another four years. The funds will provide an upgrade of our front-line fire engine, increase full-time staff, and build additional living space for our full-time crew. Residents should be assured we have two ambulances ready for service at all times. This means we can have an ambulance or truck en route within 3 to 4 minutes from the time a 911 call is received.

The Fire Hall has been closed to the public (except for elections) for the last year and will remain closed at least through the summer of 2021. Our focus is on the safety of our teams, the patients, and all the residents. Safety is our number one goal.

The Emergency Services Department had a total of 390 runs in calendar year 2020, which was an increase of 31 runs over the prior year. Medical runs accounted for 265, plus there were ambulance responses to many of the fire calls. There were 125 fire runs: five buildings, two chimney, two grass, seven vehicle accidents, seven water rescues, twenty downed power lines, and twenty-four tree blockages on roadways. Emergency vehicles were dispatched and cancelled en route on 32 occasions, and personnel responded to eight false alarms.

Our objective is to respond to the health and safety needs of Township residents and visitors in a manner that will make people feel safe and stay safe.

The Township Library

Cora Schaeff, Librarian

The mission of the Leelanau Township Library is to provide materials and services that will contribute to the educational, informational, and recreational needs of all the people served. Our library serves a population of 2,027, but hosts 3,048 cardholders, 92 of which joined this year.

The Library hired a new Director in early 2020 just before libraries in Michigan closed their doors on March 16th due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Implementing a COVID-19 reopening plan, while keeping the staff and community safe and secure in extraordinary circumstances, was challenging.

In May, the Library pivoted to online programming by utilizing Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook to offer book discussions, story time, author talks, small business workshops, county wide collaborative library programs, and more.

Ben Purdy was instrumental in supporting the Library by creating panels and safe spacing so the building could reopen with restrictions. The Library reopened for curbside service in June and invited patrons into the building after the 4th of July holiday. Library Assistant, Marie Elena Gaspari, and Youth Services Library Assistant, Mary Crowgey, worked hard to enable the Library to remain open. Even with the closures, the Library circulated over 18,000 items!

The most exciting accomplishment of the year was the creation of collaborative programs offered by the four public libraries of the peninsula, including: a) One County, One Read; b) Cooking with Abra Berens; c) a screening of the film *Neither Wolf Nor Dog*, and d) Family Summer Reading. The Library also established community partnerships with Norte, Power! Book Bags, Dark Sky Committee of Leelanau, Parenting Communities of Leelanau County, Leelanau State Park, Northport Public Schools, and Leelanau County 4-H. In addition, the Library was able to extend service beyond its four walls by creating story walks at the Marina Park playground area and adding a Little Free Library box at the front of the physical Library building location.

Library activities during 2020 also included: a) STEM kits with Newton's Road; b) Grow with Google partnership; c) Teen Advisory Board; d) library reorganization for youth space and movies; e) youth virtual sewing program; f) End of Life virtual series and book discussion; g) director participation in leadership, advocacy and educational programs, and h) the continuous maintenance of Library materials, including the removing and replacement of worn titles.

In her first 6 months, Librarian Cora Schaeff secured over \$5,000.00 in grant funding. This funding was earmarked for PPE equipment, digital inclusion equipment, new categories of material to circulate (including Get Outdoors backpacks and snowshoes), and community program materials.

Special thanks to the Friends of the Leelanau Township Library who provided flexible financial support that allowed the library to offer safe programming during COVID-19. The board of the FOLTL includes: Silvia Gans, President; Melanie Rogers, Vice President; Susan Husken, Secretary; and Sharon Golm & Patty Noftz, Treasurers.

Where We Are Going

Preview of Proposed Activities

Fiscal Year April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022

COMMUNICATIONS & TRANSPARENCY

In the new fiscal year, the Township Board of Trustees will undertake several steps to improve communications with the public to assure greater and timely transparency about the Township's business.

Introduce an Annual Report

- The Board is introducing a new tradition by providing a written Annual Report. The Annual Report will be accessible on the Township's website.
- The Annual Report provides an overview of the Township operations, finances, and plans for the upcoming fiscal year.
- The Annual Report provides a preview of the projected capital expenditure plan for the coming fiscal year.

Management

- The Township will investigate acquiring up-to-date management software to improve financial reporting and annual budgeting.
- The Township will increase the number of personnel trained in financial reporting to assure cross training and secure redundancy in record keeping.
- The Township is committed to completing audit requirements in a timely manner and accepting the annual audit within six months of the close of each fiscal year.
- Additional personnel will be trained to manage the Township website.

Access to Information

- To improve the transparency associated with Township business, we will produce and post meeting minutes, agendas, and related materials in a more accessible and timely manner. The goal is to have materials available for review no less than 72 hours prior to meetings.
- The current year's budget document will be accessible on the Township's website.

- State statute requires meeting minutes be posted within eight days of the meeting. The Township's goal will be to post meeting minutes within 72 hours of the conclusion of meetings.
- Zoom meetings will be recorded and viewable.
- The Township will investigate the development and maintenance of a new website in order to better inform, communicate, and engage with the public regarding Township business and issues or matters of public concern.

Public Outreach

- Trustees Harder and Murray have agreed to convene periodic forums to encourage citizen dialogue and foster information sharing about Township matters of note and concern. Our trustees recognize that the monthly Township board meeting's primary purpose is to conduct the routine business of the government. Consequently, the monthly meetings do not provide a significant amount of free time for open discussion and conversation among attendees. We believe a community forum will better serve the interests of informed and concerned citizens wishing to participate in the Township's civic affairs.
- We recognize the development of the current budget was not a smooth process as the COVID-19 restrictions limited the opportunities for meetings, reviews, and the public input we would have preferred. There was a steep learning curve for the new Township officials to learn the details and better understand "fund accounting" procedures and limitations used by governments.
- The new team's first budget review remains a work in progress. We will continue to ask questions, learn, and adjust in order to bring greater simplicity, uniformity, understanding, and efficiency to Township finances.
- Next year, it is our intention to convene a public hearing(s) in the weeks prior to the adoption of the FY 2022-23 budget in order to assure public awareness and input in the development of the Township's budget and to repeat the process in subsequent years.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

There are several important objectives and initiatives we wish to accomplish. These initiatives will help the Board acquire knowledge, improve the flow of information, and offer opportunities for members of the public to become involved and engaged in public policy developments. Good work begins with planning.

Planning

- The budget will support the development of a new multi-year Master Plan, to be undertaken by the Planning Commission.
- The budget will support a new 5-year Recreation Plan for the Township, to be undertaken by the Parks & Recreation Committee. A current “Community Recreation Plan” is a requirement for funding applications from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.
- We will develop a maintenance plan for each Township park and structure before the end of the year.

Public Input

- The Village of Northport and Leelanau Township have initiated a conversation and expenditure review to identify areas of commonality where improved efficiencies and cost savings may be achieved in the coming years.
- The Supervisor will appoint, with Board approval, a citizens advisory committee to undertake an update of the “Long Range Emergency Service Plan,” which was last completed in 2015.
- The Supervisor will appoint, with Board approval, a citizens advisory committee to evaluate and make recommendations, in consultation with the County Highway Commission, on the status and improvement needs for non-primary roads.
- The Supervisor will appoint, with Board approval, a citizens advisory committee to evaluate and make recommendations for improved library facilities and services.
- The Supervisor will appoint, with Board approval, a citizens advisory committee to explore job creation, economic development, internet access, and related topics to promote prosperity in the Township.
- The Supervisor will appoint, with Board approval, a citizens advisory committee to evaluate current debt service on the sewer and to evaluate accounting, auditing, and record keeping options for the Township.

BUDGET SUMMARY FOR LEELANAU TOWNSHIP

Fiscal Year April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022

Leelanau Township begins the new fiscal year on a solid financial basis with healthy fund balances and cash reserves. Emergency services and police protection comprise the largest portion of the Township budget. 78% of Township revenue comes from real estate taxes (\$2,364,000.00). 56% of Township spending is directed to Emergency Services and police protection (\$1,640,000).

Financials for Prior Fiscal Year (2020-2021)

- Leelanau Township had revenues of \$2,875,000.
- Leelanau Township spent \$2,011,000.
- Revenue exceeded the expenses in the prior fiscal year by \$864,000.
- Leelanau Township total cash reserves as shown by the year-end balance attributed to all funds was \$3,585,000.

Financials for Current Fiscal Year (April 1, 2021-March 31, 2022)

(All figures are estimates.)

Leelanau Township revenue	\$ 3,029,000
Total Real Estate Tax revenue	\$ 2,364,000
General Operations Fund revenue	\$ 834,000
Emergency Services Fund revenue	\$ 1,791,000
Facilities Fund revenue	\$ 143,000
Police Protection Fund revenue	\$ 115,000
State Revenue Sharing	\$ 136,000
Projected budget expenditures	\$ 2,901,000
Estimated Year End Budget Balance	\$ 128,000
NLTUA (sewer) Debt Service Expense	\$ 156,000
Township Library Operations Expense	\$ 154,000

Policy Objectives

Accumulated cash reserves will be reduced by directing resources toward satisfying a backlog of capital investments for infrastructure and facilities.

Cash will be accrued over the next few years in preparation for the future purchase of additional ambulance and fire vehicles.

The Township will satisfy state statutory obligations to complete planning documents on schedule in 2021. The Township will undertake additional multi-year planning initiatives to engage the public in anticipation and preparation for future needs. The budget allocates \$30,000 for planning and additional funds to support citizen advisory committees and economic development plans.

The Township's debt retirement obligation for the Northport/Leelanau Township Utilities Authority (NLTUA) is increased by \$10,000 to satisfy the gap between anticipated revenues and the amortization payment schedule required between now and April 2028 when the bond debt will be retired. The annual set aside for debt retirement will be \$70,000.

Personnel

The Township's Division of Emergency Services will add three additional employees to assure a compliment of four professionals are on duty during each shift. Fire Hall staff will include the Chief, 12 full time trained professional union members, and 15 part time employees who are in reserve and serve on call as needed. Increasing the professional workforce will raise the payroll, but it is expected to reduce overtime costs. EMS payroll is established in large part by the union contract, which was negotiated in the fall of 2020. The total estimated payroll expense, including social security and insurance benefits, for Fire Hall staffing is \$1,136,000.

In addition to the Fire Hall personnel, the Township has four salaried persons (three elected officials and the Librarian) and 16 part-time employees. The Township's estimated total payroll expense, including social security and insurance benefits, for the 2021-2022 fiscal year is \$1,558,000.

Over the course of the next four years, the Township will achieve pay equity for the Chief of Emergency Service, the Township Librarian, and Township Trustees. Currently, the Chief and Librarian are the lowest paid among their peers in Leelanau County. Applying the Michigan Township Association's payroll survey shows Leelanau Township Trustees are compensated at approximately half of the statewide standard. In subsequent years, the Township's objective will be to reach the 90th percentile of comparative salaries for these offices.

Part-time assistance will be provided for the office of Planning and Zoning to handle Short-Term Rental applications and improve response time to letters, public comments, and resident communications regarding matters pending before the Planning Commission.

For the first time, the Township budget allocates funds to employ a grant writer to research and prepare proposals to assist in securing federal, state, and private sector funds to help satisfy and supplement financial needs.

CAPITAL PLAN/FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT FUND

Braman Hill: Skateboard obstacles	\$ 6,000
Buster Dame Park: Fenced and gated dog park	\$10,000
Christmas Cove Township Park: Dune and parking lot repair	\$ 50,000
EMS Capital:	\$ 40,000
Library: Pavilion & outdoor Wi-Fi venue	\$ 7,000
Omena Beach Park: ADA accessibility to beach and toilets	\$ 5,000
Peterson Park: ADA accessibility to the pavilion; Parking lot expansion at the pavilion	\$ 45,000
Woolsey Airport: ADA accessibility to toilets; Terminal work	\$ 15,000
Township Roads:	\$ 50,000
Total:	\$228,000