

# CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from Cascade Charter Township • Winter 2019



- + 2020 Elections
- + KDL Events
- + Farewell to Deputy Toonstra

# NEWS FROM THE SUPERVISOR



Two familiar faces in the Township office you may recognize will soon be gone. Denise Biegalle, our deputy clerk and human resources director, will retire at the end of January 2020. For the past 15 years, Denise has been a steady and

capable hand overseeing every election during that period. In addition to the many election duties, she has also been responsible for the maintenance of all the records of the Township, which is no small feat. Denise has also been the person handling human resources for the employees, overseeing passport applications and coordinating everything related to the three Cascade Township cemeteries.

Roger McCarty, our assessor, is also retiring the first of the year. Roger has been with Cascade Township for the last 30 years and has proven to be a fair and thorough assessor, guiding his department through the years on all the commercial, industrial and residential growth that has taken place. Roger has been recognized by his peers for his expertise, teaching knowledge and leadership in a number of professional organizations.

Both these individuals have contributed greatly during their tenure behind the counter at the Township office. On behalf of the Township Board, I would like to thank them for their dedicated service to the community and wish them the best in their upcoming retirement.



## Township Contacts

### Township Hall Office Hours

Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Supervisor

Rob Beahan; 949-1500  
rbeahan@cascadetwp.com

### Clerk

Sue Slater; 949-1508  
sslater@cascadetwp.com

### Treasurer

Ken Peirce; 949-6944  
kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

### Trustees

Jim Koessel  
jkoessel@cascadetwp.com  
Jack Lewis  
jlewis@cascadetwp.com  
Tom McDonald  
tmcdonald@cascadetwp.com  
John Shipley  
jshipley@cascadetwp.com

### Manager

Ben Swayze; 949-1500  
bswayze@cascadetwp.com

### Assessing

Roger McCarty; 949-6176  
rmccarty@cascadetwp.com

### Building Inspections

Brian Wilson; 949-3765  
bwilson@cascadetwp.com  
Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Friday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Community Development

Steve Peterson; 949-0224  
speterson@cascadetwp.com

### Fire

Adam Magers; 949-1320  
amagers@cascadetwp.com

### Sheriff/Non-Emergency Dispatch

336-3113

### Community Policing Officer

Eric Toonstra; 632-6435  
eric.toonstra@kentcountymi.gov





# From the CLERK

## 2020 ELECTIONS

*Sue Slater, clerk*

2020 will be a busy election year. The Michigan state primary is March 10, the state primary is Aug. 4 and the general presidential election is Nov. 3.

We will need many more precinct inspectors to staff our 10 precincts. The Cascade Township clerk's office is looking for people to continue the time-honored tradition of working the polls on Election Day. By working as a precinct inspector, residents can serve their community and earn extra income at the same time.

Inspectors will be stationed at one of the 10 precincts throughout the Township and will be responsible for opening the precinct on Election Day, ensuring voters are registered and are voting in the proper precincts, assigning ballots and closing the polls. For the larger elections, we will need seven to eight workers in each precinct.

Precinct inspectors are paid for working on Election Day and also receive additional payment for attending mandatory training prior to the election. The clerk's office does not have the resources to properly staff 10 precincts; we need precinct inspectors to make our elections run smoothly. They truly are the backbone of our democracy and we are very fortunate to have a wonderful group of inspectors, but more are needed for the upcoming year.

Precinct inspectors must be at least 18 years old and a qualified and registered voter in the state of Michigan. Inspectors are allowed to serve in a community other than their own. Precinct inspector applications are available at the Cascade Township clerk's office or by visiting [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com).

## WINTER TAXES INFORMATION

Winter 2019 tax bills and informational notices were mailed Dec. 1.

Winter taxes are due and payable now, and may be paid without any penalty or interest charged as late as Feb. 14, 2020. If you do not receive a tax statement during December, please check the Township's website or call the treasurer's office at 616.949.6944.

Payments are receipted on the same business day they are received. We recommend you allow seven days to ensure a timely delivery. An informational letter is enclosed with the bill for alternative payment instructions and an E-Z pay application. Please include a telephone number on your check because we may need to contact you.

Your tax bill information is available 24/7 at [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com):

- Click on 'Quick Links' (left side of the screen).
- Click on 'Property/Parcel Lookup'.
- Enter parcel number, address or name in the search bar.
- Click on the parcel number and the tax information tab.

On March 1, 2020, all unpaid real property taxes will be forwarded to the Kent County treasurer for collection. Postmarks are not accepted.

For more information, please contact the treasurer's office at 616.949.6944.

## sign up for our E-NEWSLETTER

Sign up for our e-newsletter to stay up-to-date on what makes Cascade a great place to live, work, eat and play. Please visit [cascadetwp.com/Reference-Desk/eNews.aspx](http://cascadetwp.com/Reference-Desk/eNews.aspx) and follow the steps to receive monthly updates.



# SPREADING JOY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

## ANGEL TREE & TOYS FOR TOTS

### ANGEL TREE

The Cascade Township office will once again be a collection site for the Angel Tree campaign. Name tags for children who are in need of gifts will be available Nov. 9 – Dec. 17, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.

### TOYS FOR TOTS

The Cascade Township Fire Department is accepting new, unwrapped toys for the Toys for Tots program at Station 1, located at 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE. Toys can be dropped off from Nov. 11 – Dec. 16, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Farewell to DEPUTY TOONSTRA

Greetings from your east precinct community officer,

I am sad to report that this will be my final letter to you. At the beginning of the new year, I will be taking a new position in the detective bureau. It has been an honor both getting to know and working alongside all of you. I have thoroughly enjoyed my interaction with the citizens of the east precinct over the last year and a half. It seems like just yesterday I was introducing myself to all of you. The good news, however, is that I am handing over the reins to a very capable and accomplished deputy. Deputy Omar Dieppa will be taking over for me in January.

Deputy Dieppa is a hard-working and very well-respected member of our department. I have no doubt he will do an excellent job as the new east precinct community officer. I have included his contact information below so you can call or email him and introduce yourself. Lastly, I have given a lot of advice over the last year and a half regarding crime and how to avoid becoming a victim of it.



My final piece of advice is simple and applies to everyone: Keep your hands to yourself, leave other people's stuff alone and be kind to one another. Have a great holiday season and be safe.

Sincerely,  
Deputy Eric Toonstra

Deputy Omar Dieppa  
Omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov  
616.632.6435

# FROM THE DESK OF YOUR ASSESSOR

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Assessment change notices will be mailed on or before Feb. 20, 2020. If you are a new homeowner and do not receive your notice by March 1, please call the assessor's office. Registration of deeds and taxpayer name changes at the county level can take up to eight weeks.

In addition to change of assessment, the notice will indicate:

- If there was a transfer of ownership in 2019.
- If there is a principal residence exemption on your property for 2020. If you purchased the property in 2019, please check the PRE status carefully. Contact the assessor's office if the PRE status is wrong.

## **Board of Review Will Hear Assessment Appeals on March 9 and 10, 2020**

- Appointments will be made beginning March 1. An appeal application and instructions will be mailed to you when you make an appointment.
- Sales data and comparative information will be available on the Township's website, in the assessor's office and in the Cascade Township Library beginning Feb. 27.
- Letter appeals are acceptable if you are unable to attend a Board of Review hearing. Four copies of your letter and supporting documents must be received no later than March 9, 2020. Please send them to Cascade Township Board of Review, 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.
- An appeal to the Board of Review, either in person or by letter, is a prerequisite for an appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal for residential properties. Commercial/ industrial properties do not have to appeal to the Board of Review to appeal to the state.

## **Small Business Property Tax Exemption Applications**

Small business property tax exemption applications are available in the personal property report packet mailed at the end of each year or delivered electronically. The exemption is available for personal property accounts with a true cash value of less than \$80,000. For 2020, if you have a small business exemption on your 2019 Cascade Township personal property account and still meet the eligibility requirements, you do not need to refile the form. If you do not currently have an exemption, you must file a form as soon as possible to meet the Feb. 20, 2020 deadline and claim the exemption. If you do not file a completed form by the deadline, you will not be able to claim the exemption for 2020.

## **Poverty Exemption Applications**

Poverty exemption applications are available for low-income property owners who are unable to pay their property taxes.

Applications are available at the assessor's office and are approved or denied by the Board of Review. Forms are available at the assessor's office.

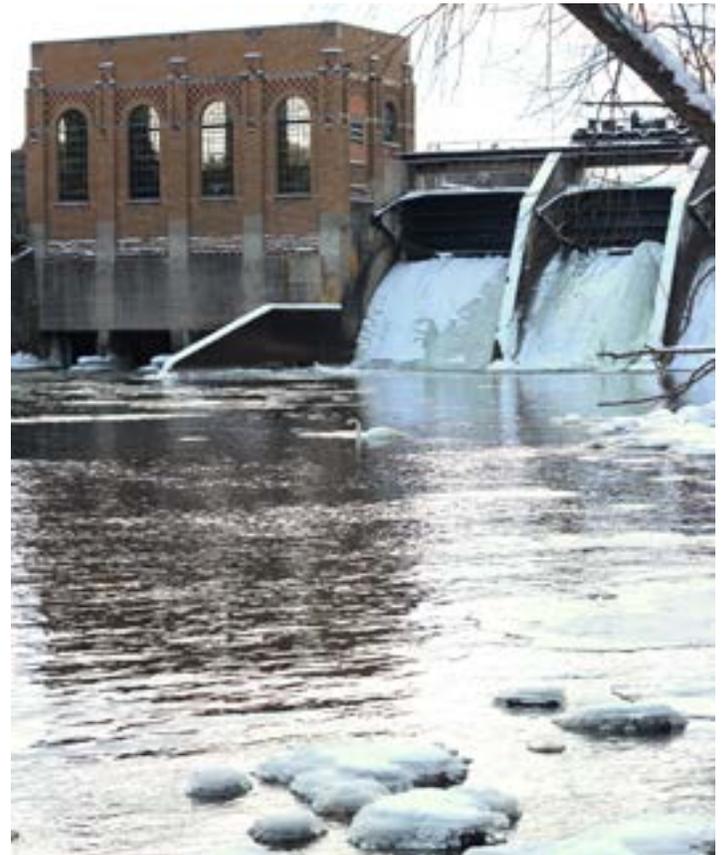
## **Veterans Exemptions Applications**

Those who the Veterans Administration has determined are 100% disabled are eligible for a property tax exemption. Surviving spouses are potentially eligible, as well. Forms are available at the assessor's office.

## **Did You Know?**

1. The June 1 filing deadline for principal residence exemptions applies to new applications only. You do not need to reapply each year.
2. It is your responsibility as a taxpayer to review your property record card periodically to be sure you agree with all the information that is currently of record.
3. The assessing staff is available Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feel free to stop in or call 616.949.6176 if you have any questions about your property. The assessing system is quite complex, so we are always willing to help our taxpayers understand how it works.

Roger McCarty  
rmccarty@cascadetwp.com  
616.949.6176



# HALLOWEEN PARTY a spooktacular night

On Halloween, Fire Station 1 received visits from hundreds of princesses, ghosts and other characters. Almost 500 bags of candy were shared with attendees.

The Cascade Township Fire Department would like to say thank you to all our amazing sponsors who teamed up with us to make Halloween safe and fun for so many children this year. We couldn't have done it without you!

Brann's Steakhouse & Grill  
Carlin, O'Brien and Batson  
Cascade Automotive Services, Inc.  
Cascade Firefighters Association  
Cascade Hospital for Animals  
Costco  
D&W Fresh Market  
Forest Hills Foods  
Front Line Services, Inc.  
Funny Business Agency, Inc.  
Goldfish Swim School  
Kingsland Hardware

Koenes Auto Body  
Lacks Enterprises, Inc.  
Meijer  
Mister Car Wash  
Ms. Lynne Deering  
Northpointe Bank  
PHOENIX Safety Outfitters  
Ranir, Inc.  
S. Abraham & Sons, Inc.  
Sunrise Senior Living Management Inc.  
Walgreens  
Walmart



## From your **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT**

I recently celebrated my fifth year as your code enforcement officer for Cascade Township. All the nostalgia got me thinking about a topic that frequently comes into play, but is not well known to all residents – public road right of way.

In Cascade, most of the public roadways are owned and maintained by the Kent County Road Commission, but a small portion of 28th Street is under the authority of the state of Michigan. The public roads are placed in the public road right of way, but the right of way extends beyond the paved portion of the roadway. The size of the road right of way can vary depending on the type of road. A typical road right of way is usually about 66 feet wide. Although some roads may not be placed in the exact center of the road right of way, it is usually safe to assume this property extends about 15 feet beyond the paved or dirt edge of a road. The part of the road right of way that extends past the roadway itself is intended to be kept clear for the purposes of roadway repairs and maintenance, pedestrian pathways and public utilities, such as telephone, sewer, water, cable and gas. It should be noted that private streets

also have a right of way that is owned by the neighborhood association or private property owners collectively.

In many neighborhoods, the section of the road right of way beyond the pavement is imperceptible and just looks like a lawn. Property owners are also usually required to mow the grass in this area, which can contribute to the false impression that the property is their private yard. This can lead homeowners to place underground fencing and sprinklers, temporary signs and landscaping in the road right of way. This can be problematic when it comes time to do construction on the road itself or when one of the utilities needs to perform maintenance. It should be noted that placing anything in the road right of way is not permitted, which also means that if these items are damaged, they are unlikely to be replaced.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Stephanie Fast  
sfast@cascadetwp.com  
616.285.2327

# events From **KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY**



## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOK SALES

Several book sales will take place in the coming months with thousands of books for every age and interest.

- Jan. 18 • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- March 20 • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- March 21 • 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- March 22 • noon to 3 p.m.

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON LIVE

The Cascade Township Branch of Kent District Library has planned an exciting lineup for this year's Sunday Afternoon Live concert series. Come join us for a free indoor concert featuring the best in local entertainment.

- Dec. 8 • 2 p.m. – Common Chord with Rev Robert Jones and Matt Wintruba – traditional blues, gospel and folk
- Jan. 12 • 2 p.m. – Mustard's Retreat – folk
- Feb. 9 • 2 p.m. – Blackthorn – Celtic
- Feb. 23 • 2 p.m. – Edye Evans Hyde Trio – jazz
- March 8 • 2 p.m. – Debra Perry & Majestic Praise – gospel

## FAR OFF GALAXY FESTIVAL

Families with children will love this Star Wars®-themed festival sponsored by the Friends of the Cascade Library. You don't need to travel to a galaxy far away to enjoy crafts, games and amazing giveaways!

- Jan. 3 • 10 a.m. to noon

## KDL BOOK CLUB AT YMCA

Join us for a new book club at the Mary Free Bed YMCA. Non-YMCA members are welcome, and YMCA members may enjoy the benefit of the Kidzone. Meet us in the boardroom of the Mary Free Bed YMCA, 5500 Burton Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

- Dec. 16 • 7 p.m. – Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks
- Jan. 20 • 7 p.m. – The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce
- Feb. 17 • 7 p.m. – The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafón

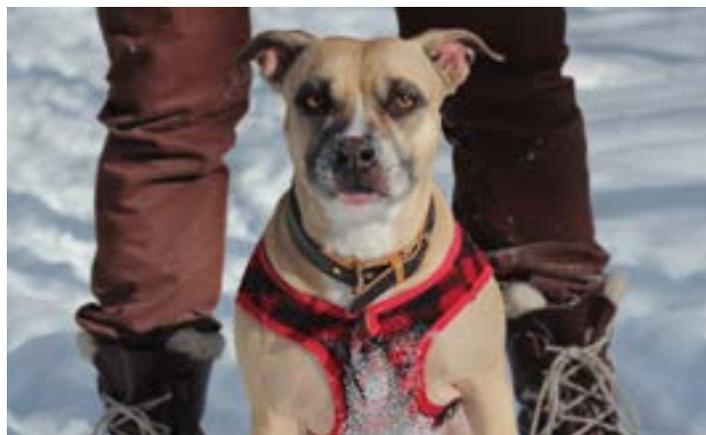
## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: A READING GROUP

Our reading group tackles the big questions! This group features stories exploring social justice topics and a small group discussion where all questions are welcome. KDL librarians and community volunteers will read books on the month's topic, then we'll discuss the books in small groups, enjoy snacks and create a cool craft. For ages 4 to 11 with parents or caregivers.

- Jan. 11 • 10 to 11 a.m. – Let's Talk About Refugees
- Feb. 8 • 10 to 11 a.m. – Let's Talk About Civil Rights

## renew your **DOG LICENSE**

Kent County dog licenses are available in the Township offices year-round. A current rabies certificate and proof of neuter/spay should be provided at the time you apply for the license.





PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI  
PERMIT NO. 657

## Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
(p) 616.949.1500  
(F) 616.949.3918  
cascadetwp.com

# HOW TO PREVENT PORTABLE GENERATOR HAZARDS

## From your building inspector

Portable generators are useful when temporary electrical power is needed, but they can be hazardous. Carbon monoxide poisoning, electrical shock and fire are the primary hazards associated with portable generators. The United States Fire Administration recommends the following tips to reduce the risks associated with portable generators.

### To Avoid Carbon Monoxide Hazards:

- Always use generators outdoors and away from doors, windows and vents.
- Never use generators in garages or other enclosed areas.
- Make sure your home's carbon monoxide detectors are in proper working condition.
- Pay attention to flu-like symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, confusion, fatigue and nausea – especially if experienced by more than one person.
- Immediately move to fresh air and call 911 if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning.

### To Avoid Electrical Hazards:

- Keep generators in dry, open canopy-like structure.
- Dry your hands before touching generators.
- Use heavy duty extension cords that are properly grounded and free of cuts or defects.
- Never plug generators into a wall outlet to “back-feed.”
- Have a qualified electrician install a transfer switch if the generator is connected to the house wiring.

### To Avoid Fire Hazards:

- Turn off the generator and let it cool before refueling. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- Store fuel in proper containers away from fuel-burning appliances.

Brian Wilson  
bwilson@cascadetwp.com  
616.949.3765