

CASCADE CONNECTIONS

Cascade Charter Township Newsletter
Summer 2024

Inside this edition

- Friendship Park Dedication Set For June 29
- New Projects Web Page Keeps You in the Know
- An Independence Day To Remember
- Fire Millage Information

From the **SUPERVISOR**

Grace Lesperance



Dear Cascadians,

As we begin another busy summer, I want to highlight some current and ongoing Township projects and initiatives – all of which further our goal of preserving Cascade’s unique character and enhancing residents’ quality of life.

Thank you to the many residents, volunteers and staff who are making these collaborative efforts a reality.

Creating Community Spaces

Cascade Road Pedestrian Bridge over the Thornapple River:

Reconstruction of the pedestrian portions of the bridge on Cascade Road over the Thornapple River will begin later this summer. Enhancements to both sides of the crossing include widening the pathways and installing a physical barrier between the pedestrian and traffic lanes.

Westdale Memorial Park (next to old Township Hall): Thank you to the Kent Garden Club for their help redoing some of the park’s landscaping – with an *emphasis on softening its current post-modern design*. Volunteers will assist the Township in installing period-appropriate and native plants. We are also bringing a **real Christmas tree** back to the park, thanks to a generous donation from Our Daily Bread Ministries, a Cascade-based organization.

Enhancing Public Safety

Targeting High Crime Areas: The Board of Trustees adopted *Cascade’s first hotel licensing ordinance* in May.

The narrowly tailored ordinance will proactively crack down on the disproportionate amount of crime and illicit activities in and around certain hotels near 28th Street and



Westdale Memorial Park (kitty-corner from Tuffy). Volunteers from the Kent Garden Club are helping the Township tone down the park’s post-modern design and restore landscaping.

CASCADE VILLAGE *Reimagined*

Visit www.CascadeTwp.com/Village or scan the QR code to learn about the future of Cascade Village!

Cascade Township
DDA

the Interstate 96 overpass.

Fire Millage: A new millage is needed to replace the Fire millage that expired in 2023, as well as to keep up with increased costs and inflation. See details on pages 11 and 12.

Village Improvements

The Tuffy Teardown/Extension of Tassel Park: Plans to revamp the area around Cascade Road and 28th Street – extending to the Thornapple River – are in the early design phase. Updates to follow as these projects proceed.

Looking forward to Independence Day Celebration

Finally, we hope you join us

as we once again gather as a community to celebrate our country’s independence on July 4, my favorite Cascade tradition. We are delighted to have Jill Forton, who recently retired as lead pastor of Cascade Christian Church after 40-plus years, as this year’s Grand Marshal. Find all the event details and a map on pages 7-9.

It is an honor to serve as your Supervisor. Remember – in addition to regular business hours – I have evening office hours the first Thursday of each month from 6-7 p.m. in the History Room of the Cascade Library.

You can also reach me anytime at 616.949.1500 or glesperance@cascadetwp.com.

Clerk Ready for Aug. 6 Primary

A great deal happens behind the scenes before any election. Your Cascade Clerk's Department is switching into high gear in preparation for the Aug. 6 Primary.

The biggest change this year is early voting. Michigan voters now have the right to cast a ballot early and in person at an early voting site before Election Day. In February the Department piloted this program as required by the state Bureau of Elections and it went very well. Neighboring jurisdictions had comparable turnout to Cascade, including East Grand Rapids, the City of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Plainfield Township and Wyoming.

Both early in-person voting and absentee voting allow you to cast a ballot prior to Election Day. However, there are key differences:

Early in-person voting allows residents to cast a ballot during a nine-day period

From the CLERK

Sue Slater



preceding Election Day. Voters cast a ballot similarly to how they would do so at a polling place on Election Day. Residents are issued a ballot and insert the ballot into the tabulator at a designated early voting site. No totals are generated until Election Day.

Absentee voting allows citizens to request a ballot by mail or in person at their local clerk's office. Voters can complete their absentee ballot at home or at the clerk's office and submit it in an envelope by mail, in person, or by drop box. After an absentee ballot is received by the local clerk, the absentee ballot is processed and then tabulated on Election Day.

Early Voting at Wisner

In February, early voting was conducted at the Cascade Township Office. However, with higher voter turnout expected for the August Primary and November Presidential Election, we have decided to move early voting to the Wisner Center. This larger venue will cause less disruption to the normal daily functions of Township employees. All voters will receive a notification via postcard of this change.

Other Voting Reminders

On Election Day, voters may only vote in their designated precinct. This means no early voting or absentee ballots will be offered or accepted on Election Day. Also, remember Aug. 6 is a state Primary; all candidates will be on the same ballot, but voters may select only one party.

Please contact the Clerk's Office with questions at 616.949.1508.

Summer Tax Bills Due Sept. 16

Summer tax bills should be in your mailbox by July 1. Summer taxes are due Sept. 16, 2024. Payments made after that date will incur interest and penalties. There are multiple convenient ways to pay your taxes:

In Person: Payments may be dropped off at the Township Office during business hours or in the drop box outside of the main entrance.

Online: Pay online beginning July 1 by visiting cascadetwp.com and selecting the blue 'Taxes' button on the home page.

By Phone: Call 855.770.5856 and use access code 90603016.

By Mail: Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statement. Allow at least seven days for delivery, as the Township doesn't accept postmarks as proof of timeliness.

Didn't receive a bill? Please visit

From the TREASURER

Windy Korstange



www.cascadetwp.com or call the Treasurer's office at 616.949.6944 if you don't receive one.

Attention Travelers: If you will be away this summer, please provide a forwarding or temporary address. We will forward your summer tax bill if it is returned by the Post Office.

Summer Tax Deferment

Cascade Township offers a Summer Tax Deferment to eligible property owners. If you qualify, you may pay your summer taxes, without penalty or interest, through **Feb. 14, 2025**. To qualify, your household income must be less than \$40,001, and you must be either 62 years or older; a paraplegic, quadriplegic, totally disabled; blind; an eligible serviceperson, veteran

or widow/widower of a veteran.

Application forms are available online or at the Township Office. Completed forms must be returned by **Sept. 16, 2024**. You must request this deferment annually.

Check your property tax status 24/7 by visiting www.cascadetwp.com and selecting "Property/Parcel Lookup" on the home page. From there, select the link to search for property and tax information:

- Search All Records By (top of page)
- Second drop-down arrow to select data search (Address, Name, Parcel Number)
- Double-Click on Selected Parcel
- Click Tax Information Tab

Have a safe summer.

Questions? Please call the Treasurer's Office at 616.949.6944.



Library Outdoor Space 'Comes to Life'

Dedication of Friendship Park set for June 29

Friendship Park Amenities

Part entertainment space, part natural area, Friendship is unique. Here are just a few items that make this new gathering place special:

60-foot pavilion with green roof: Intended for use by the community, this custom-designed shelter will double as a concert stage.

Granite fountain: Donated by the family of Jack and Helen Lewis, this six-foot-tall, four-tiered water feature includes a 10-foot diameter pool and recirculates 600-700 gallons of water per hour.

Wooded Exploration Area: Paths wind through a grove of mature oaks leading to a play area with sculptures and outdoor instruments (relocated from Westdale Memorial Park).

Native gardens and prairie/meadow restorations: Native perennial gardens represent a variety of Michigan flora. The two open fields are being restored to native prairie/meadow habitat.

Three lawn gathering areas: These will be maintained as traditional lawn/picnic spots.

In less than one year, this 3.5-acre property has been completely transformed from an underutilized open lawn into a stunning outdoor gathering space.

"It's been incredible watching Friendship Park come to life," said Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance. "This beautiful park will no doubt become an integral part of Cascade."

The dedication, scheduled for **11 a.m. Saturday, June 29**, will feature remarks from township leadership, Kent District Library staff and project contractors. The public will be invited to tour the park. Staff will be positioned at different points to answer any questions they might have.

The approximately \$1.75 million project was funded by the Township's Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Friends of the Cascade Library, a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), and private donations.

"Development of this park has truly been a community effort," said Parks & Recreation Director Melanie Manion. "The collective vision of Friends of the Cascade Library, the Township, and contractors made this multi-faceted space a reality."

Project partners include landscape architecture and environmental services firm Native Edge, Inc. of Grand Rapids, which both designed the park and oversaw construction; Caledonia-based Harder & Warner handled all grading, utility installation and hardscapes; Belmont-based The Design Forum designed and engineered the custom pavilion; and Grand Rapids-based Visser Bros. Construction built the pavilion.

Wycliffe: 'A Perfect Little Spot'

More than 50 people gathered on May 18 to mark the official opening of Wycliffe Trailhead Park. Cascade's seventh recreation area also provides safe access to the Township's 17-plus miles of non-motorized pathway.

"The park was overwhelmingly asked for by the public," said Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance during the event. "It's a perfect little spot."

Besides providing a safe place for residents to park and enter the pathway system, this 1.86-acre parcel features several nature trails that gently wind through the property and two nature-based play areas.

Westdale Memorial Park Refresh

This spring, a group of Township residents and community stakeholders met to discuss options and develop a vision for Westdale Memorial Park (next to the old Township Hall). Staff then connected with the Kent Garden Club, which voted to take it on as one of their 2024 volunteer projects.

Their plan is to cultivate a garden that's period-appropriate for the adjacent Cascade Historical Museum.

Improvements include:

- Replacing concrete and existing foliage with a late 19th century-style perennial garden.
- Plant a live evergreen tree for holiday displays.
- Move flag pole and memorial stone closer to Cascade museum.

Improvements on Docket for Cascade Recreation Park

Cascade's oldest and most heavily used park needs attention to ensure safety and continue to meet modern recreational demands.

Following a competitive bidding process, the Township selected civil and landscape engineering firm Troyer Group to develop a new master plan for the park. The next step is gathering public input. Residents should look for a survey later this summer asking what your concerns are and what you'd like to see in the park.

Final designs should be complete by the end of 2024, with work expected to begin in 2025.



From left: Rev. Michael Rocque of Unity Spiritual Community of Grand Rapids, Township Clerk Sue Slater, Parks & Recreation Director Melanie Manion, Parks Committee Vice-Chair Eileen Boekenstein, and Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance.



Above: Dames Rocket, a pretty but invasive flower native to Eurasia.

Left: Volunteers bag garlic mustard at Burton Park in late May. Working just a few hours a week over two months, the crew removed more than four tons of the invasive weed from Township properties.

Volunteers Remove Massive Amount of Garlic Mustard

Eager Parks & Recreation volunteers had a busy spring, spending **262 hours** pulling more than **four tons** of invasive garlic mustard from various Township-owned properties, including park and cemeteries. A string of weekend workdays through April and May helped limit the spread of the noxious invasive from the forest floor following intensive bittersweet and oak wilt treatments.

In late May and early June, Volunteer

Coordinator Jeanine Heibel turned the workday crew's attention toward an aggressive invasive – Dames Rocket. Although pretty, this flower native to Eurasia outcompetes native species and reduces food resources.

With the heat of summer, Parks & Recreation will be hitting pause on volunteer efforts. Keep an eye on the Township website and social media for fall workday schedules.

For more information, email volunteer@cascaadetwp.com.

New Projects Page Keeps You Updated

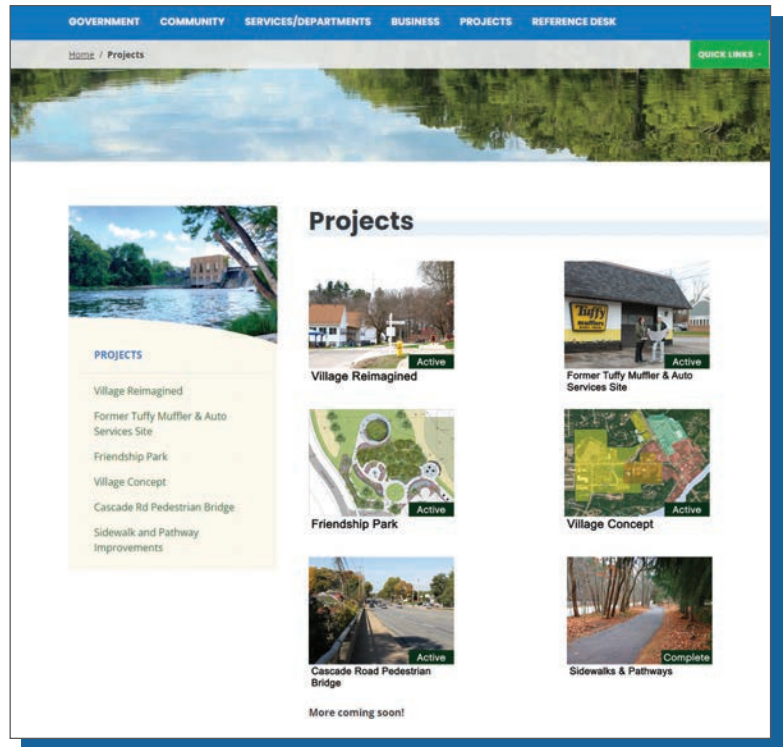
Interested in progress on the many projects Cascade Township has in motion? Check out our new Projects page, accessible from the Township website's homepage.

Residents can now monitor projects they care about without waiting for the next newsletter. Project pages will include a description of the project, the location, funding source, and an estimated completion date. Updates will be added regularly as these initiatives progress.



Scan QR to visit
cascadetwp.com/projects

The Township's largest upcoming project is reimagining the area around Cascade Road and 28th Street, extending to the Thornapple River, into a more pedestrian-friendly small-town center. Visit the Village Reimagined project page for details.



Infrastructure Corner

Safety a Priority with Bridge, Pathway Improvements

Cascade Road/Thornapple River Bridge Pedestrian Improvements: Reconstruction of the pedestrian paths on both sides of the bridge to improve safety will begin later this summer. Improvements include widened sidewalks, vehicle-rated barriers between the sidewalk and road, decorative fencing, and ornamental street lighting to better tie in with anticipated Cascade Village improvements. Township Engineer Aric Thorne estimates the work to take 8-10 weeks. The bridge will remain open to north and southbound traffic during construction.

This project is being funded with state ARPA grants and contributions from Cascade's Downtown Development Authority.

Pathway Improvements and Connectivity: Reconstruction of 1.14 miles of pathway along Spaulding Avenue and a portion of Burton Street is nearly complete. These improvements are a continuation of the Township's larger five-year plan to revitalize the Township's pathway system. Next year, attention moves south of the river to repair portions of the Cascade Road/30th/36th Street pathway loop.

Other improvements set for 2025 include the planned Burton Street pedestrian bridge over Interstate 96. Tying in with the freshly repaired Spaulding-Burton loop, this structure will provide pedestrians and bicyclists a safe and



Trustee Timmy Noordhoek (right) and Manager Jade Smith discuss pedestrian improvements to the Cascade Road bridge.

convenient route over the freeway. This project is possible due to Cascade's request for and receipt of \$3.5 million in one-time state funding made available last year for infrastructure projects.

Sidewalk Repairs: Repairs were made this spring to sidewalks throughout the Cascade village area, which includes portions of 28th Street, Old 28th Street, and Cascade Road. These included the replacement of damaged and/or hazardous condition sidewalk and out-of-compliance sidewalk that needed to be upgraded to modern standards.

Then & Now:

Cascade Road and Thornapple River Drive

The Cascade Historical Society has an excellent collection of photos from our township's past displayed in its museum and in its online archive at accessionary.com. Here are just a few popular historical images of what was once here juxtaposed with the approximate location today:



Blacksmith Shop

For decades, one of the noisiest and busiest spots in the village was right across from the old town hall on Thornapple River Drive: a blacksmith shop.

Built in 1865, the blacksmith shop was manned by Henry Coger from 1871 to 1915. The shop was then purchased by his apprentice John Timmer. Located at the river's edge, the blacksmith shop was perfectly positioned to salvage the remains of the old iron-top bridge removed from Cascade Road in 1923.

In later years, it housed Zoodsma's Hardware Store and the Village Bike Shop. Today, the site is occupied by Reva Salon and Qwest Property Management.

Always a 'Gathering Place'

Erected in the 1870s, the building on the northwest corner of Thornapple River Drive and Cascade Road was a general store owned by G.P. Stark. By 1960, it was Grover Buttrick's village grocery store. In later years the building housed several other businesses.

Today, the extensively remodeled historic building houses the Gathering Place, a popular restaurant.



About the Historical Society

The Cascade Historical Society meets the first Thursday of each month, except July, at 10 a.m. at the Cascade Historical Museum, 2839 Thornapple River Drive SE.

If you have questions, comments, information or photos to share, email cascadehistory@yahoo.com.

A 4TH to Remember



The Bicycle Parade as seen from above in 2019.

Independence Day in Cascade Continues to Evolve

Just like Cascade itself, the July 4 festivities have changed over the years. Township-wide celebrations, according to the Historical Society, started back in 1954 when Cascade Township volunteer firefighters Sybrant Dykhous and Lyle Dykhuizen organized the Community Parade with the help of the local American Legion.

That first venture was a procession of Township fire trucks along a short stretch of Cascade Road to Thornapple River Drive.

"The parade was one of the most important events of the summer," said Jan Schichtel, Cascade Township native and member of the Historical Society. "You had to be there – to hear the clack of cards stuck into the spokes of bike wheels and the jingle of bells on handlebars; to cheer for Mr. (Sybrant) Dykhous leading the parade; to offer respect for the American flag by removing your hat and putting your hand on your heart."

Through the years, festivities expanded. In the 1960s, the festivities grew to include refreshments and entertainment. Retired



A parade float passes by the former Standard Oil Gas Station during a parade in the 1970s.

Cascade Christian Church Pastor Jill Forton (*this year's parade Grand Marshal* – see profile on page 9) remembers earlier iterations of the celebration.

"I fondly remember when the book sale was held on the grounds of the church, and when the chapel steps were the stage for the music and dancing for the event."

Eventually, the parade became so large and popular it was changed to turn down 28th Street, and festivities were moved to

their current location.

Although much has changed since those early years, what remains constant is the desire to bring the community together to celebrate our nation's birth.

That tradition of fellowship continues with the opening of Friendship Park, a brand-new gathering space on the grounds of the Cascade Library.

See CELEBRATION, page 9

Cascade Township
INDEPENDENCE DAY
CELEBRATION MAP


 **JULY 4, 2024** 

Parade: 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Celebration: 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

ENTERTAINMENT | MARKET

-  FAMILY ACTIVITY AREAS
-  FOAM PARTY
-  FRIENDS BOOK SALE
-  CONCERT LAWN
-  WILDLIFE AREA
-  PAVILION
Soul Syndicate performing
-  SPLASH ZONE/FIRE HOSE AREA

CONCESSION/REFRESHMENTS

-  FOOD VENDORS
-  DINING AND SEATING TENTS

INFORMATION/RESTROOMS

-  EMERGENCY SHELTER
-  INFORMATION
-  RESTROOMS
-  FOOT TRAFFIC ONLY*



Community Parade & Float Contest Information

What makes Cascade Township's Independence Day celebration stand out is the parade, which the public is encouraged to participate in.

Parade Times and Route

The parade officially begins with the Bike Parade at 9 a.m., immediately followed by the Community Parade.

The parade begins at the intersection of Cascade Road and Burton Street, turns west at 28th Street, and terminates at 28th Street and Thornhills.

Pre-register for Parade by June 28

New this year is a requirement that Community Parade participants pre-register. The Township requires this for administrative purposes and to ensure a well-organized and safe event.



Please complete a form by **scanning the QR code or visit bit.ly/CT4thParade**. Please register no later than **June 28**. Before registering, please review the official rules on the registration form.

For the **Bike Parade**, participants can decorate anything non-motorized with wheels – bikes, wagons, strollers, scooters and more. Meet at 8 a.m. outside Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, 6655 Cascade Road SE. Bike Parade participants 14 and younger must wear a bike helmet per Township ordinance. **Registration is not required for the Bike Parade.**

For the Community Parade, registered participants are asked to meet at the

parade and march staging area at 7:30 a.m. outside Thornapple Covenant Church, 6595 Cascade Road SE.

Community Parade Float Contest
 Community Parade participants are encouraged to compete in the float contest. This year there will again be two categories: families/neighborhoods and faith groups/businesses/other organizations. Participant floats will be judged based on spirit and creativity. Winners in each category receive a trophy and display a winner banner on their float during the parade. Please, only one float is allowed per family, organization or neighborhood.

If you have questions, contact the Township at 616.949.1500, or email reception@cascasetw.com.

Meet Parade Grand Marshal Jill Forton

This year's Cascade Community Parade Grand Marshal is Jill Forton. A Cascade Township native, Forton has been a member of Cascade Christian Church for 54 years and led the church as pastor for the past 12 years.

"I grew up going to D&W and Kingsland's where they were on Old 28th Street," said Forton in an email. "I went to school in Caledonia, as my family home was on the line for Cascade and Caledonia (schools)."

After graduating high school, Forton attended Michigan State University and later Calvin Theological Seminary before serving the church.

"It has been an honor and privilege to serve the church, to know so many fine Cascade and Ada families," said Forton. "In the last 12 years as a pastor I have officiated at 120 weddings and 280 funerals for many of the longtime residents of Cascade."



Grand Marshal Jill Forton

The Fortons have a long history of taking part in Cascade's July 4 festivities.

"I love the July 4 festivities in Cascade," Forton shared. "I have served at the church chicken BBQ and more recently

the hot dog and brat sale for more summers than I can remember. I have also loved walking in the parade with our chapel float, running to the sides of the parade route to pass out candy to every child I could find."

Her husband, Mike Forton, works as a librarian in Lake Odessa, and has volunteered at the Cascade Friends of the Library book sale. They have one son, Max.

"Max grew up in the church," Forton said. "He used to ride his bike in the parade. As a Boy Scout he helped carry the flag up the hill to Kingsland's Hardware."

With so many connections to Cascade's Independence Day celebrations, Jill Forton was a natural choice to lead the parade.

CELEBRATION

Continued from Page 7

"We're so excited to tie in Friendship Park as the iconic new centerpiece of Cascade's Independence Day celebration," said Cascade Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance. "This gathering space only enhances everything the community loves about this event."

Festival Details

Festivities officially kick off at 9 a.m. with the Bike Parade, immediately followed by the Community Parade. Once the parade wraps up, the fun migrates to the street fair and celebration along Jacksmith Avenue and on the grounds of Friendship Park, the library and adjacent properties.

"Jacksmith Avenue will again serve as the main thoroughfare and access point for festivities and is closed to motor vehicles for the duration of the event," said Cascade Township Parks & Recreation Director Melanie Manion. "From Jacksmith, everything will be accessible – rides in the Noto's parking lot, food trucks will line the street, and live music will echo from the new bandshell."

Families can look forward to enjoying rides, rock walls, a zip line, air brush temporary tattoos and bounce houses with water

features. Kids not afraid of getting a little messy can take part in a spray foam party in the library parking lot. Cleanup will be easy – Cascade Fire Department will provide 'defoaming' services as well as a way to cool down via a fire engine hose.

Beginning at 10:30 a.m., local band Soul Syndicate will christen the brand-new pavilion with covers of well-known soul, rhythm and blues and other favorites from the 1960s to today.

Naturally Patriotic

Tying in with the opening of Friendship Park, several new nature-focused events are also planned for the festival, such as:

- **A birds of prey program** by Blandford Nature Center staff
- **A beekeeping demonstration** from Thornapple Woodlands Beekeeper Don Snoeyink
- **A native plant discussion and walk** presented by local biologist and former Cascade Parks & Recreation Committee Chair Ginny Wanty

Refreshments

Those looking for refreshments during the celebration will have several food trucks to choose from. Additionally, Cascade Christian Church will be selling concessions as part of their annual fundraiser.

Friends Book Sale

The Friends of the Cascade Library's annual July 4th Book Sale kicks off at 8 a.m. at the east end of the library parking lot and inside the Cascade Library's Wisner Center. All proceeds benefit the library. The sale runs through 3 p.m.

Community Fireworks Show

After a day in the sun, Cascadians often head to neighboring Ada Township for an evening firework show at the east end of Amway headquarters, 7575 Fulton St. East, Ada. "It's a joint community event," said Fire Chief Adam Magers. Cascade Township shares about 50 percent of the cost for the show. The Cascade Fire Department leaves setup and the majority of operations to Ada.

Before the firework show, the community is invited to enjoy live music at Ada's Legacy Park from 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. The fireworks show itself starts at just past sunset. Plan on bringing lawn chairs and/or a blanket. For more information, visit adamichigan.org/events.

Township Office closed for July 4 holiday

Our offices will be closed on Thursday, July 4, in observance of the holiday and will reopen on Friday, July 5.

Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Audit Complete

At the June 12 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board received the auditors' opinion for Cascade Township's Fiscal Year 2023, along with the audited financial statements. The Township received a "clean" audit opinion.

Trustee Timmy Noordhoek, Vice Chair of the Personnel & Finance Committee, noted: "I appreciate the fresh perspectives of Manager Jade Smith and Finance Director Lorna Nenciarini as well as their emphasis on transparency. Residents can find the completed FY 2023 audit and financial statements on our website in mid-July."

Visit cascadetwp.com/financials to view current and past budget and financial reports.



Cascade Township Trustee Timmy Noordhoek (center) discusses the 2023 Financial Audit with (from left) Supervisor Grace Lesperance, Treasurer Windy Korstange and Manager Jade Smith.

Board Adopts New Hotel Licensing Ordinance

At its May 8, 2024 meeting, the Cascade Township Board of Trustees adopted a Hotel Licensing Ordinance to combat ongoing crime and public safety concerns at certain hotels and motels in Cascade.

These hotels and motels have been generating a disproportionate number of emergency calls. "Between January 2022 and February 2024, these "hot spots" have generated 1,590 emergency calls – both police and fire – including a murder and multiple overdoses," said Trustee John Shipley. "It was time to act."

Shipley further noted complaints from adjacent businesses have been on-going. "The excessive calls from these hotels could potentially impact emergency responses to other calls. There is also a question of fairness. At least one local business impacted by neighboring hotels hired their own private security."

Manager Jade Smith worked closely with Township legal counsel to draft the ordinance, which reflects similar initiatives by other Michigan communities including the City of Grand Rapids and Battle Creek.

The ordinance requires hotels and



Cascade Township Trustee John Shipley discusses emergency service calls with Fire Chief Adam Magers at Fire Station No. 1.

motels to obtain operating permits through a process that includes on-site inspections. Failure to maintain public order and safety, as set forth in the ordinance, will result in monetary fines and, if necessary, revocation of the permit (meaning the business cannot operate in Cascade).

Manager Smith, along with Fire Chief Adam Magers, is working closely with the Kent County Sheriff Department (KCSO) to develop the enforcement process.

In addition to the Hotel Licensing Ordinance initiative, Trustee Shipley shared that results from increased Kent County Sheriff Department (KCSO) patrols have been positive and that the targeted patrols will continue.

Trustee Shipley encourages residents to help keep Cascade Township safe by sharing their observations with the Sheriff's Department and obeying speed limits.

Township seeks approval of new fire millage

If approved, 20-year levy would not exceed 1.37 mills

On Aug. 6, 2024, Cascade Charter Township is asking voters to authorize a millage not to exceed 1.37 mills for 20 years: 2024 to 2043.

Since 2014, Cascade Township has experienced a population growth of 47% and an increase in emergency calls of 111%. The addition of Fire Station 2 in 1996 helped the Department support this growth. Combined, both stations serve a 36 square-mile area and respond to more than 2,500 calls every year. That's nearly seven calls per day.

By 2044, the Department's annual call volume is expected to exceed 5,000. This millage increase would address our current needs and future growth by ensuring that we can maintain our excellent standards of service, repair and upgrade our facilities, and purchase new fire apparatus when needed.

The cost of running a fire department is significant:

Vehicle Maintenance

The NFPA standard for life expectancy of a fire engine is 15 years. The cost to purchase a new fire engine is approximately \$1 million. The Cascade Fire Department owns and maintains a fleet of vehicles, including:

- 3 Fire Engines
- 1 Water Tender
- 1 Rescue Vehicle
- 2 Brush/Grass Vehicles
- 2 Medic Vehicles
- 4 Staff Vehicles
- 1 Boat

In addition to these vehicles, the Department will soon need an additional vehicle to accommodate growth.

Continued Training and Education

Firefighters, by law, must maintain certifications and participate in continuing education for firefighting, EMT, HazMat, Tech rescue, and emergency driving. Currently the

FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MILLAGE PROPOSAL

On **AUGUST 6, 2024**, Cascade Charter Township is asking voters to authorize a millage not to exceed **1.37** mills for twenty years, 2024 to 2043.

This millage will replace the one that expired in 2023 and consolidate the millage that expires in 2027.

In its first year the millage will cost the average homeowner **\$91.87** (\$7.66 per month) based on a taxable value of \$240K (a home value of \$480K).

A DECADE OF GROWTH

47% population increase
111% increase in emergency calls

SUPERIOR SERVICE

4 min, 58 sec
Average response time for 36 square miles with service from 2 stations.
2,500+ emergency calls annually

MILLAGE SUPPORTS

Maintain 24-hour fire protection and emergency services

- Certifications, training, and education for firefighting, EMT, HazMat and Rescue
- Provide and maintain all equipment to meet all laws/standards
- Maintain apparatus fleet

Scan here for more information

cascadetwp.com/firemillage



purchase of new fire apparatus



The life expectancy of a fire engine is 15 years. 3 need to be replaced over the next several years. The average cost of an engine has increased by 280%.

facility repair and upgrades



Buttrick Ave Station 2 was last updated two decades ago. The concrete pads, overhead doors, and roof are all in poor shape and other structural repairs are needed.

Department has 36 firefighters. Each firefighter requires hundreds of hours of continuing education training every year.

Aging Facilities

Fire Station 2 on Buttrick Avenue first opened in the 1990s. The structure still has its original vinyl siding, doors, appliances, and systems that are at the end of their expected useful life. Funding will be needed to replace and upgrade these systems.

Cascade Township understands how complicated millages can be, so we have prepared additional information for you to consider including an informational graphic (included above) and a Frequently Asked Questions document on the next page.

Casting A Ballot

With the recent passage and implementation of new election laws, it's easier than ever for voters to cast their ballot on Aug. 6.

Election Day: Polls in Michigan are open from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

On Election Day, voters may only vote in their designated precinct. Not sure of your precinct? Find your polling place by visiting cascadetwp.com/elections.

Absentee voting: All registered voters have the right to vote by mail via an absentee ballot. You may request an absentee ballot from the Township Clerk's Office. For more information, visit Michigan.gov/vote. Absentee ballots may be dropped off anytime day or night in the ballot drop box outside the Cascade Township Office or the drop box in the Wisner Center parking lot.

Early, in-person voting: All Michiganders now have the right to vote early in person. Early voting for the Aug. 6 Election will be at the Wisner Center, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE, from Saturday, July 27 - Sunday, Aug. 4. All voters will receive a postcard with this updated information by mail ahead of the election.

For more information, contact the Clerk's Office at 616.949.1508.



FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MILLAGE PROPOSAL FAQs

What are Cascade voters being asked to consider?

Approve a millage of **1.37**. Approval of this millage would do three things: (1) replace a previous fire millage of .5013 that expired in 2023; (2) consolidate an existing .2242 fire millage set to expire in 2027 (meaning the current Board would cease to levy the .2242 millage upon approval of this new millage); and (3) negate the need to supplement the fire dept. annually with .1905 general operating millage dollars.

How is the Cascade Fire Department currently funded?

The fire department is currently funded by 4 sources: a millage that expired at the end of 2023; a millage that expires in 2027; a millage that expires in 2033; and dollars from the Township's general operating millage.

Why does the fire department need this funding?

Over the last 20 years Cascade Township has seen a population growth of 47%. The fire department has seen a 111% increase in calls for emergency services. A fire engine has seen a 280% increase in cost. All this plus significant inflation over the years has costs outpacing revenues.

* How much will it cost me?

The overall 1.37 millage with the consolidations and replacements equals an overall increase of .3829 mills. This equates to \$91.87 in its first year (\$7.66 per month) based on Cascade's average home value of \$480,000.

What will the millage pay for?

- o Maintain current level of emergency services, including personnel and firefighter and EMT certifications
- o Needed fire equipment and needed apparatus replacements.
- o Station 2 facility repair and upgrades.

What is a mill?

A mill is 1/1000 of a dollar, or 0.001 cents. If a tax rate or millage rate is 1.37 mills, a resident is taxed 0.00137 cents for every dollar, or \$1.37 per \$1,000 of the taxable value of the property. For example, for a residential home with a taxable value of \$100,000, the cost of 1.37 mills would be \$137 per year, or \$11.42 per month.

Why does it cost so much to run a fire department?

Laws pertaining to those services. For example: Firefighters must maintain certifications/continuing education for firefighting, EMT, HazMat, Tech rescue, emergency driving. Departments are also required to provide and maintain equipment that meets all laws/standards. For example, turnout gear ensembles are close to \$5000 and are only compliant for 10 years. Cascade maintains more than 50 sets! A fire engine costs approximately 1 million dollars and is expected to last 15 years. Cascade maintains an entire fleet of apparatus.

How did the township fund the new fire station?

The Township used funds that were saved for this purpose; federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds; and issued a bond for about half of the station's cost. State Revenue Sharing will be used to make the bond payments. The proposed millage dollars will NOT be used to pay for the fire station bond payments.

What's the difference between Cascade Fire department and neighboring departments?

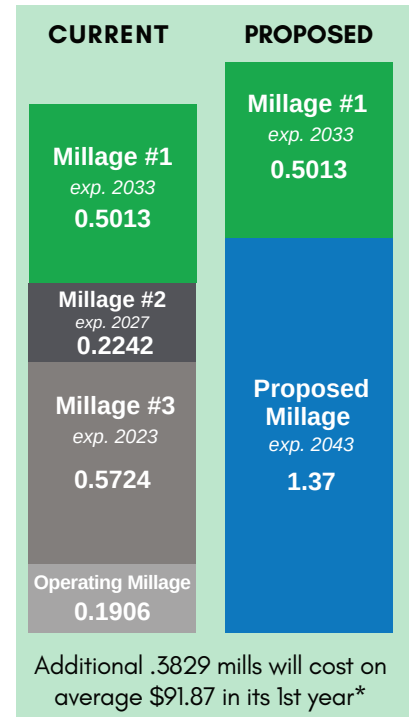
	<i>Emergency Calls</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Avg. Cost / Run</i>
CASCADE FIRE	2500+	\$3M	20,000	\$1,200
KENTWOOD FIRE	6000+	\$9M	54,000	\$1,500
ADA FIRE	650	\$1.6M	14,000	\$2,461
CALEDONIA FIRE	1200	\$1.5M	16,000	\$1,250

The fire engines still look nice. Why do they need to be replaced?

The NFPA standard for life expectancy on a fire engine is 15 years for frontline service and no more than 20 years for reserve apparatus. This is especially true for Michigan fire apparatus being exposed to salty winter conditions.

What happens if the millage is voted down?

The Fire Department would have to cut services, capabilities, manpower, equipment, etc. The failure can have far-reaching and severe consequences affecting overall public safety, emergency response effectiveness, property insurance costs, and overall quality of life. It underscores the importance of sufficient funding for fire and emergency services to maintain community resilience and safety.



scan here for more information

cascadetwp.com/firemillage

Events Calendar

June 29

**Friendship Park
Dedication Ceremony**

11 a.m., 2870 Jacksmith
Ave. SE

July 4

**Independence Day
Celebration**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Township Office Closed in
Observance of Holiday

July 13

**Cascade Firefighters
Association 4th Annual
Charity Hockey Game
and Parking Lot Party**

4 p.m., Patterson Ice Arena
2550 Patterson Ave SE

Aug. 6

National Night Out

Mary Free Bed YMCA
5500 Burton St SE

Aug. 5-Aug. 10

**Kent District Library
Vibes Fest**

Cascade Library, 2870
Jacksmith Ave. SE

Aug. 22

Metro Cruise Warmup

Thornapple Plaza

Aug. 24

Metro Cruise Pit Stop

Thornapple Plaza

Sept. 2

Labor Day

Township Office Closed
in Observance of Holiday



KDL's summer reading and activity challenge returns

Kent District Library's "Summer of Wonder" is back! A unique blend of learning and reading, this annual event challenges participants to complete 30 days of reading or engage in a variety of activities. These activities may include attending library programs or following inspiring craft prompts.

Once the 30-day journey is complete, participants receive a prize, and are entered into a grand prize drawing. Children through age 17 receive a free book; adults will earn a canvas tote bag. For more information or to sign up, visit KDL.org/summer.

[Free Music Festival, Vibes Fest returns to Cascade branch](#)

Kent District Library's free local music festival Vibes Fest returns to the Cascade branch Aug. 5-10. Now in its second year, Vibes Fest is a platform to showcase the incredible talent of local musicians, many of whom are featured on KDL's locally focused music streaming service, Vibes.

The festival kicks off Monday, Aug. 5 with performances in the morning and afternoon each weekday by a variety of artists. The main event runs from 10 a.m.-9:15 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10, and



will feature 13 musical acts performing both inside the library and at the adjacent Friendship Park.

During and between performances, attendees can grab refreshments from a beer tent and fresh tacos from a local food truck.

[Perk for Cardholders](#)

Did you know that your library card grants you access to exclusive benefits at various cultural institutions? With KDL's Perk Pass program, you can receive complimentary access to tickets for the Grand Rapids Children's Museum, Frederik Meijer Gardens, and the Grand Rapids Art Museum.

For more information check out kdl.org/perkpass.

Sign up for our **E-NEWS**

Sign up for our e-newsletter to stay up-to-date on Township events, projects and more. Scan QR code or visit cascadetwp.com/enews.



Board of Trustees



Grace Lesperance Supervisor
Contact: 616.949.1500 | glesperance@cascadetwp.com
Other Committees: Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Parks, PFAS Advisory, Pathways, Strategic Planning Implementation, Personnel/Finance, Infrastructure, Village Design Review



Sue Slater Clerk
Contact: 616.949.1508 | sslater@cascadetwp.com
Other Committees: Election Commission, Governance



Windy Korstange Treasurer
Contact: 616.949.6944 | wkorstange@cascadetwp.com
Other Committees: Strategic Plan Implementation, Personnel & Finance, Village Design Review



Timmy Noordhoek Trustee
Contact: tnoordhoek@cascadetwp.com
Other Committees: Planning Commission, Public Safety Advisory, Personnel & Finance



John Shipley Trustee
Contact: jshipley@cascadetwp.com
Other Committees: Infrastructure, Public Safety Advisory, Thornapple River SAD, Strategic Plan Implementation



Tom McDonald Trustee
Contact: tmcdonald@cascadetwp.com
Other Committees: Zoning Board of Appeals



Jim Koessel Trustee
Contact: jkoessel@cascadetwp.com
Other Committees: Public Safety Advisory, Election Commission

Township Contacts

Office Hours*

7 a.m. to 4 p.m.,
Mondays - Thursdays;
7 a.m. - 12 p.m. Fridays

Township Manager

Jade Smith; 949.1500
jsmith@cascadetwp.com

Assessor

Jennifer Genter; 949.6176
jgenter@cascadetwp.com

Building Inspections

Mondays-Thursdays, 7 a.m.-
4 p.m.; Fridays, 7 a.m.-12 p.m.
Brian Wilson; 949.3765
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

Community Planning & Development Director

Andrea Hendrick; 949.0224
ahendrick@cascadetwp.com

Fire Chief

Adam Magers; 949.1320
amagers@cascadetwp.com

Parks & Recreation Director

Melanie Manion; 949.1500
mmanion@cascadetwp.com

Sheriff/Non-Emergency Dispatch

336.3113

Community Policing Officers

Omar Dieppa; 632.6435
omar.dieppa
@kentcountymi.gov
Kate Chase; 430.7811
katherine.chase
@kentcountymi.gov

**New office hours take effect
on Monday, July 1, 2024.*



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Independence Day Celebration Information & Event Map

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