

TOWNSHIP ROAD DISTRICT REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENNIAL COMMITTEES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT

I. Unit of government submitting this report:

New Lenox Township Highway Department

II. Information about our Road District

- A. We are located in **Will County**. There are **24** townships in our county.
- B. The population of our Township is **43,490**, as of the 2020 census.
- C. We have **28** employees of the Township (not including elected officials).
- D. We have **6 full time and 4 part time** employees in our Road District (not including elected officials).
- E. Our annual budget for 2023 is: **\$5,548,675.00**.
- F. Our Township's equalized assessed valuation for 2023 is **\$1,920,764,483.00**

III. Information about Our Committee

A. Committee Members:

Township Highway Commissioner	<u>Ron Sly</u>
Township Supervisor	<u>Cass Wennlund</u>
Township Trustee	<u>Marty Boban</u>
Township Trustee	<u>Barb Kaupus</u>
Township Trustee	<u>Steve Friant</u>
Township Trustee	<u>Patty Deiters</u>
Township Resident	<u>Mike Hickey</u>
Township Resident	<u>Robert Lash</u>



B. Dates that our Committee Met (50 ILCS 70/20)

First (Organizational) Meeting (must occur prior to June 10, 2023):	<u>May 11, 2023</u>
Second Meeting:	<u>October 12, 2023</u>
Third Meeting:	<u>June 13, 2024</u>

IV. Programs/Services Offered by our Township Highway Department.

A. Our Township Highway Department offers the following services and programs: Snow Plowing, Salting, Trash Clean-up, Street sweeping, Tree trimming and removal, Branch pick-up following storm events, Dead animal removal, Parkway mowing, Ditch cleaning and grading, Culvert replacement, Storm sewer installation, maintenance and repairs, Utility locating, Street lighting including installation and maintenance, Vehicle and equipment maintenance, Building and facilities maintenance, Evaluation and recommendations for residents private drainage concerns, Pavement maintenance (includes patching, overlays, shoulder reinforcement and striping), Sidewalk installation and maintenance, curb Repair and replacement, Sign installation and maintenance (both regulatory and informational), placement and management of radar speed unit. We also provide Management and Permitting for utilities and home construction/improvements including roadway Bond procurement, final inspections and resolution of any outstanding issues.

B. Other services/programs we could possibly provide:
Leaf pick-up

V. Social Service Agreements

A. We partner with the following not for profits to offer social services:

<u>Entity:</u>	<u>Services Provided:</u>
1.New Lenox Township Food Pantry	Facilities, Equipment & Special Events
2.Share Fest	Facilities & Temporary Storage
3.New Lenox Historical Society	Temporary Storage
4.Providence High School	Salt Procurement & Storage
5.Lower Des Plaines Watershed Group	Stream testing, Training & Public Outreach

B. Our residents have benefitted from these agreements in the following ways:
The Food Pantry shares space previously unused by the Highway Department. We also provide them with equipment for handling larger deliveries when necessary.
Share Fest is a non-profit organization which provides food , clothing and other needs within the Will County area. We provide temporary storage and usage of our paved areas for their various programs on an as needed basis.

The Historical Society temporarily utilizes some unused space for storage of furniture.

Providence High School is a local parochial school which purchases salt for snow and ice control through the Highway Department.

Lower Des Plaines Watershed Group provides services to the Highway Department which are required by the State of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency regarding storm water runoff analysis and mitigation.

VI. Intergovernmental Agreements

A. We partner with, or have Intergovernmental Agreements, with the following other Governments (List all):

Entity:	Services Offered:
1. Village of New Lenox	Snow Plowing, Mowing, Sweeping, Line Televising
2. Manhattan Township	Equipment Sharing
3. New Lenox Fire Protection Dist.	Mowing, Safety Training
4. New Lenox Park District	Mowing
5. New Lenox Grade School Dist.	Salt Procurement & Storage
6. Green Garden Township	Equipment Sharing
7. Will County Land Use	Drainage Improvements
8. Will County Highway Dept.	Paving and Emergency Services
9. METRA	Rail Crossing Improvements
10. CN Railroad	Rail Crossing Improvements
11. City of Joliet	Snow Plowing & Roadway Improvements
12. Village of Mokena	Snow Plowing, Mowing & Roadway Maintenance
13. New Lenox Township	Tire Disposal, Recycling, Salt Procurement

B. Our Township's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation in the following way: 1) By sharing specialized equipment owned by some of these entities we have negated the need to purchase our own or to contract that work at significantly higher costs. This also saves other agencies which we provide assistance to. 2) By coordinating snow removal activities between agencies, we avoid duplication of services, reduce travel and employee hours.

VII. Review of Laws, Township Policies, Township Rules and Procedures, Township Training Materials, and other Documents for Road District

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Township to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

State laws applicable to Townships, including, but not limited to the Township Code (60 ILCS)

Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)

Policy on public comment

Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))

All of Elected Officials have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))

- Schedule of All Township Regular Meetings for Calendar or Fiscal Year (5 ILCS 120/2.03)
- Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)
- Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))
- List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Township's Control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))
- IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1)
- All of our Elected Officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5)
- Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))
- Our Intergovernmental Agreements
- Our Social Service Agreements or Contracts
- Our budget and financial documents
- State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1)
- Our budget and financial documents
- Reports on government efficiency, including "Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments" by Wendell Cox (2016); "Local Democracy and Townships in the Chicagoland Area," by Wendell Cox, (January 2012).

VIII. What Have We Done Well? New Lenox Township and its Highway Department have a long history of fiscal responsibility. Annual Levy increases have consistently been below those allowed by statute (Truth in Taxation). Despite this fact, services provided have continued to improve by utilizing creative methods and the sharing of resources with other agencies. Our employees are fairly compensated and take pride in assisting our residents with their concerns. Being the form of government “Closest to the People” allows them to develop a relationship with the citizens we serve.

IX. What Inefficiencies Did We Identify/What Are our Next Steps?

Most of the cost increases and inefficiencies in local government can be traced back to new regulations imposed by the State and/or Federal Government. These unfunded mandates continue to increase workload and costs yet rarely achieve any substantive benefit to the taxpayer. In addition, these acts empower State bureaucracies to generate significant labor and paperwork requirements all in an effort to preserve or expand their positions.

X. What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?

The greatest opportunity to increase the efficiency of Government at the local level is to increase the communication and interaction between all levels. The assumption that all levels of government know what the other agencies are responsible for and who to contact at those agencies is a formula for failure. This interaction needs to be developed at the first line management level, not the political level.

XI. Studies on Governmental Efficiencies

In preparing this report, we reviewed several studies on local government efficiency. These studies show that:

- The average local government in Illinois serves 1800 residents compared to the national median of 2850 individuals
- Most townships in Illinois have no bonded indebtedness. Together with road districts they are an integral element of local democracy. Township expenditures have grown at a lower rate than those of any other level of government since 1992.
- Townships have lower labor costs and employ mostly part time employees.

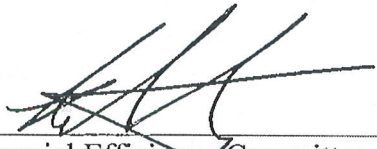
XII. Our committee’s recommendations regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency:

As the form of government “closest to the people”, Township government provides the most hands-on approach to providing personalized service to the taxpaying public. If the theory that a bigger level of government can provide better, more cost-effective service then why have villages or counties. If the consolidation theory “holds water” then all the services they provide can be better served by the state or arguably the federal government. I’m certain that our state representatives would relish the opportunity to take care of a constituent’s drainage issues or roadway repairs, presumably more efficiently and at a reduced cost.

Highway Commissioners offer a “one stop shop” when it comes to service being rendered to their constituents. Residents need not go through layers of employees, foremen, department heads and administrators to reach the top decision maker. The Commissioner knows the limits of his department both legally and fiscally and can often help the resident in a much shorter time frame.

As such, the key to increased accountability and efficiency in local government is increased communication and interaction between all agencies. This coupled with practical training for key personnel will provide significantly better service to the taxpayers.

Chairman:



~~Decennial Efficiency Committee
New Lenox Township Hwy. Dept.~~

Date: 11 / 12 / 24