

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP FINAL REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENNIAL
COMMITTEES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT
TOWNSHIP AND ROAD DISTRICT JOINT REPORT
November 2023**

Unit of government submitting this report:

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP / WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP ROAD DISTRICT

Information about our Township

- A. We are located in Will County and there are 24 townships in our county.
- B. The population of our Township is 6303, as of the 2020 census.
- C. We have 3 part-time employees of the Township (not including elected officials).
- D. We have 1 full time and 5 part-time employees in our Road District (not including elected officials).
- E. Our annual Town budget for 2023-24 is: **\$279,639**
- F. Our annual Road District Budget for 2023 is - **\$660,651**
- G. Our Township's equalized assessed valuation for 2023 is **\$188,322,244**.

Information about Our Committee

A. Committee Members:

- Township Supervisor Michael Stanula
- Township Highway Commissioner Mike Smith
- Township Trustee George Obradovich
- Township Trustee Tracy Heldt
- Township Trustee Mark Herlitz
- Township Trustee Teresa Peterson
- Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment) Darwin Koehn
- Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment) Paul Goldrick
- Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment) Joseph Burgess
- Township Resident (Highway Comm. Appointment) Charles VanGemert

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

First (Organizational) Meeting
(Must occur prior to June 10, 2023): April 11, 2023

Second Meeting: September 7, 2023

Third Meeting: November 6, 2023

Additional Meetings (List All): None

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

Programs & Services Offered

A. Our Township offers the following services and programs:

- General Assistance
- Washington Township Dial-A-Ride program for trips within Washington Township
- Participate in Will County Will Ride Transportation program
- Senior Presentations (Some in partnership with either the Beecher Police Dept., Beecher Fire Protection District and others)
- Senior Bus Trips (Baseball games, concerts)
- Senior Movies (6-7 times a year)
- Senior Breakfast Events with Speakers addressing senior topics
- Senior Holiday Dinner
- Yearly Flu Shot Clinic
- Washington Township Food Pantry - In 2022, the pantry distributed 20,065 lbs. of food serving 735 families and 2290 individuals.
- Washington Township Medical Loan Closet – Approximately 12-16 items picked up per month by residents
- Assist with Benefit Access Program
- Temporary Handicap Placards
- Free Notary Service
- Voter Registration Services
- Early Voting offered for every election (Over 1900 early voters since 2019 / During the 2020 General Election 1189 out of 4452 registered voters voted early at the Washington Township Center)
- Washington Township Precinct 2 Polling Place
- Sponsor programs in cooperation with the Beecher Youth Committee
- Sponsor entertainment with the Beecher 4th of July Commission
- Yearly sponsor to Beecher EMA Program
- Co-sponsor of “Concert in the Park Series” – a partnership with the Village of Beecher to offer free concerts throughout the summer for all residents
- Sponsor of village “Holiday Events” (Parade, tree lighting, etc.)
- Semiannual newsletter sent to residents
- Utilize social media for communication as necessary (Facebook)
- Electrical Aggregation Agreement with NANIA Energy
- Host facility for Will County Green Recycling Events, when requested.
- Yearly Exemption Event with Will County Supervisor of Assessments

B. Other services/programs we could possibly provide:

- Information or resources for Mental Health Awareness, Suicide Awareness, and Domestic Violence Assistance

Social Service Partnerships or Agreements

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

Catholic Charities of Joliet

- Information and Assistance Specialists assist with reduced cost license plate applications, "Aging & Disability Resources", Medicare enrollment assistance, health screenings, and many other valuable programs. They also provide referrals and resources to meet the needs of the individual.

The Kicking It Back Center, Beecher, IL

- Provides free local exercise programs, yoga, guitar lessons, karate and social activities (Bingo, Bunco, etc.)

Toys For Tots

- We offer drop off locations within the township to collect toys for this yearly program.

Beecher's Frosty Friends

- We offer drop off locations within the township to collect clothing and other items for families within the township who need assistance during the holiday season.

B. Our residents have benefitted from these agreements in the following ways:

- *Catholic Charities* has a satellite office at our building and is available two times a month. Residents don't have to travel outside of the township to have access to their services.
- We work closely with the *Kicking It Back Center* to promote each other's events and encourage residents to attend.

C. We have considered possibly offering the following social services or the following additional potential partnerships and resources:

- *The Bridge Teen Center*
- *Will County Children's Advocacy Center*
- *CASA of Will County (Began dialog in 2023)*
- *Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County (Began dialog in 2023)*

Awards and Recognitions

Our Township has received the following awards, distinctions, and recognitions:

- 2013 - Township Officials of IL (TOI) – Best newsletter by population
- 2013 - Township Officials of IL – Best website by population
- 2018 - Township Officials of IL – Best newsletter by population
- 2018 - Township Officials of IL – Best website by population
- 2022 - ITASCSC Elected Official of the Year (Clerk) (For Senior Services)
- 2023 – Township Clerks of Illinois “William Z. Ahrends” Award (Clerk of the Year)

Intergovernmental Agreements

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

- Pace Vanpool (Transportation)
- Beecher School District 200U (Transportation Facilities)
- Beecher School District 200U (Fuel)
- Beecher Fire Protection District (Fuel & Emergency Management Services)
- Will County (Mobility Management)
- Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund Member

B. Our Township's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation in the following way (list cost savings, avoiding duplicated services, etc.):

- The Washington Township Center built in 2001 and was a joint project between the Village of Beecher, Washington Township, Beecher School District and the Washington Township Road District. The Center is home to the Washington Township and Washington Township Road District offices and includes over 9,000 square feet of garage and shop space for Road District vehicles and equipment.

The west end of the building is owned by the Beecher School District and serves as a repair and maintenance shop for school district buses and vans.

There is a 60' vehicle wash bay used by all the entities.

The grounds surrounding the facility are used for school district bus parking, a shared card-controlled fuel system used by all entities, and a 1200-ton salt storage dome is shared by the Village of Beecher and Township. There is also paved parking for over 50 vehicles. This project eliminated the need for the entities to purchase and build separate facilities, fuel and salt storage thus saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is a large meeting room at the center which is available for all entities if there is a need for larger community presentations or joint meetings.

- The township and Village of Beecher each publish a biannual newsletter at approximately the same time of the year. Ads are solicited for the newsletters and ads received appear in both newsletters, so advertisers have complete coverage of the township. Ads help defer the cost of the newsletter reducing the amount of tax dollars spent to print and mail over 3000 pieces. Special community events and programs are also advertised in both newsletters and on both social media platforms.
- The township will sponsor events and services with the village that benefit all residents of the township. This includes a summer concert series, youth programs, holiday tree lighting and EMA services.

What Have We Done Well?

- Washington Township has not raised its levy since 2014, we practice strict budget discipline and total transparency.
- Our website includes a comprehensive list of Township policies, minutes, budgets, reports and general information about our township.
- All FOIA requests are completed per state guidelines, documented and filed.
- New partnerships include Catholic Charities of Joliet, The Kicking Back Center
- Our Senior Programs are well attended and offer valuable information
- We are easily approachable and listen to our residents' concerns and suggestions.
- The Township has approved an Ethic's Ordinance
- New programs included Community Blood Drive & Wellness Health Fair – partner with Beecher Fire Protection District
- Partnership with Beecher Frosty Friends program
- The Township is actively involved in community events and is well known by the residents
- Senior Scam presentation with Beecher Police
- Senior fire safety programs (Remember When) with Beecher Fire District
- Taken advantage of Commonwealth Edison “rebate” programs for new LED lighting throughout our facility and grounds
- Applied for grants through the state and county

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

- More timely review of current Township “policies” and “guidelines”. The Board is discussing guidelines that would require this information to be reviewed no less than every two years.

What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?

- Getting communication out to the residents more effectively by using other avenues besides social media and bi-annual newsletters. Many people are not on social media and getting information to this group can be challenging. We are currently looking into creating a phone “app” or web-based calendar that would include all pertinent meeting & event information available, which be updated continually

Washington Township Road District

Services Offered

- The Road District is responsible for 72 miles of roads, which is the second highest of all townships in Will County. The district tar & chipped 10 miles of roads in 2023.
- Maintaining roads, shoulders and culverts
- Maintaining township bridges
- Plows snow and salts roads as needed through winter season
- Maintaining township warning, regulatory and street signs
- Mowing ditches three times per season
- Trimming and removing trees where needed for safe sight distance.
- Removing trash and dead animals from roads and roadsides
- Issuing overweight and oversize vehicle permits
- Distributing Motor Fuel Tax funds
- Issuing culvert permits for new construction sites.
- Keeping all township equipment in repair
- Managing the Road District in budget

Intergovernmental Agreements

We partner with, or have Intergovernmental Agreements, with the following other Governments:

- Beecher School District 200U (Facility)
- Village of Beecher (Fuel Depot)
- Village of Beecher (Health Insurance)
- Will Township
- Peotone Township
- Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund Member

Our Township's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation in the following way (list cost savings, avoiding duplicated services, etc.):

- The Washington Township Center built in 2001 and was a joint project between the Village of Beecher, Washington Township, Beecher School District and the Washington Township Road District. The Center is home to the Washington Township and Washington Township Road District offices and includes over 9,000 square feet of garage and shop space for Road District vehicles and equipment. The west end of the building is owned by the Beecher School District and serves as a repair and maintenance shop for school district buses and vans. There is a 60' vehicle wash bay used by all the entities.
- The grounds surrounding the facility are used for school district bus parking, a shared card-controlled fuel system used by all entities, and a 1200-ton salt storage dome is shared by the Village of Beecher and Township. There is also paved parking for over 50 vehicles. This project eliminated the need for the entities to purchase and build separate facilities, fuel and salt storage thus saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is a large meeting room at the center which is available for all entities if there is a need for larger community presentations or joint meetings.

What Have We Done Well?

- The Road District has only raised its levy 5 times in the last 10 years, 3 of those times were 2% or less.
- All FOIA requests are completed per state guidelines, documented and filed.
- The Road District will pool their labor and equipment with other local township road districts to complete road projects in a timely manner. Different townships have different equipment and sharing equipment eliminates the need for smaller road districts to purchase equipment that is only used occasionally
- Highway Commissioner is easily approachable and listens to our residents' concerns and suggestions.
- Roads are well maintained
- Road District equipment is well maintained with most maintenance done in-house to save money
- The Road District communicates with the Beecher School District during winter weather regarding the road conditions so the school district can determine the best course of action to ensure the safety of the students and bus drivers
- Taken advantage of Commonwealth Edison "rebate" programs for new LED lighting throughout our facility and grounds
- Applied for grants through the state and county

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

- More timely review of current Road District "policies" and "guidelines". The Highway Commissioner will determine a review schedule for these items.
- Employee training after initial hiring needs to be reviewed. The Highway Commissioner will look at all aspects of necessary annual and periodic training and work to develop a program that ensures all aspects of required training are addressed.

What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?

- Getting communication out to the residents more effectively by using other avenues besides social media and bi-annual newsletters.

Review of Laws, Township Policies, Township Rules and Procedures, Township Training Materials, and other Documents

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

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

Comply - Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)

Comply - Policy on public comment

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

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

Comply - Schedule of All Township Regular Meetings for Calendar or Fiscal Year (5 ILCS 120/2.03)

Comply - Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)

Comply - Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))

Comply - FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))

Comply - Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))

Comply - Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))

Comply - List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Township's Control (5 ILCS 140/5)

Comply - Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))

Comply - IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)

Comply - Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1)

Comply - All of our Elected Officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5)

Comply - Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))

Comply - Intergovernmental Agreements on file and completed as necessary

Comply - Budgets, levies and other required financial documents are filed as per state statutes.

Comply - Annual financial audits are performed as required.

Comply - State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1)

Comply - 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).

Studies on Governmental Efficiencies

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

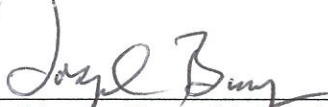
- The average local government in Illinois serves 1800 residents compared to the national median of 2850 individuals. Washington Township serves over 6000 residents.
- Most townships in Illinois have no bonded indebtedness. Together with road districts they are an integral element of local democracy. Township expenditures have grown at a lower rate than those of any other level of government since 1992. Washington Township is debt free.
- Townships have lower labor costs and employ mostly part time employees.

Our committee’s recommendations regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency:

The Committee found no issues with accountability and recommendations regarding efficiencies are noted above.

Submitted by: 
Chairman, Decennial Efficiency Committee of Washington Township

Date: 11/7/23

Attest by:  Date: 11/7/23
Washington Township Clerk

