

## **FOCUS ON DANBURY TOWNSHIP - 2023 YEAR-END REVIEW**

By Dianne Rozak, Danbury Township Trustee

[www.danburytownship.com](http://www.danburytownship.com)

February 23, 2024

Danbury Township had a full and productive 2023. Road Superintendent Brett Waldron and his staff continued with their exemplary work in maintaining parks, roads and all township property. The department has one part-time and three full-time employees. Superintendent Waldron is currently seeking a fourth full-time individual for his staff. The department assisted with 24 funeral services, mowed and trimmed Sackett Cemetery forty times and hosted the annual Wreaths across America ceremony. Residential “free mulch days” were held, the brush and leaf drop-off programs were well-received and one professional brush grinding was completed. Two township residential clean-up weeks were highly successful and will be held again in June and September. Township employees will assist staff from Cyclone Services during these Tuesday through Saturday clean-ups.

The department spent 472 hours mowing township properties exclusive of many hours of trimming. Dead or hazardous trees as well as brush in the township road rights of way and parks were removed and ditches were monitored and cleaned as needed and as a preventative maintenance measure. Northern Avenue, Park Lane and Columbus Avenue were paved. Reclamite was applied to Ebert Court and the Rockport subdivision. Crack sealing was applied where needed. 300 tons of salt was obtained through the ODOT state purchasing program and added to the 300 tons remaining from 2022. A new fuel depot at 419 Bridge road is now in place and plans are underway for a new maintenance building.

The Police Department, managed by Chief Michael Meisler, has nine full-time officers. Officer Brad LaMarca is assigned to Danbury Schools as a full-time Resource Officer during the school year and he also conducts the DARE program. K-9 Kalahan has been trained as a certified public facility therapy dog and accompanies Officer LaMarca at least two days each week and attends all athletic events. Our officers provide protection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with nine marked and two unmarked vehicles. They drove 169,345 miles patrolling during 2023. Total incidents were 3,838, down by only two from 2022. The department handled 7 incidents inside the Village of Marblehead and 158 within Lakeside. Police incidents with high amounts of attention included alarm calls, traffic warnings, lockouts, suspicious persons or vehicles, house watch requests, traffic complaints and warnings, assisting disabled motorists, animal complaints, welfare checks and assisting Danbury Fire and EMS. The department is located at 419 S. Bridge Road. They offer secure document shredding and unwanted prescription disposal services as well as house watch and senior watch. Call (419) 732-2549 to make arrangements for these free services. The township’s recycling bins are located on the south side of the police department property.

The Danbury Township Fire Department is now led by Chief Shawn Hunsicker who will formally replace Chief Keith Kahler on April 12 when Chief Kahler retires. The department reported 1,021 incidents in 2023, down 72 incidents from 2022. They were detailed as 872 EMS calls, 53 fire calls, 24 motor vehicle accidents, 53 fire alarm activations, 13 carbon monoxide activations and 6 mutual aid calls. The department roster hovers around 40. Fire

and EMS staff meet Monday evenings for training, department updates and continuing education sessions. The department is always in need of additional part-time staff. Township residency is preferred, but not required. Full training and all equipment is provided and no experience is necessary. Contact the station at (419) 798-5219 for more information. A public retirement reception for Chief Kahler and welcome for Chief Hunsicker will be held on Sunday, April 14 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the fire station located at 7870 East Harbor Road.

The Danbury Township Zoning Department is overseen full time by Kathryn Dale, AICP. Mrs. Dale is assisted seasonally by Michelle Teresi and part-time inspector Marcel Sorgi. The department continues to be the center for residential and business growth and expansion. 302 permits were issued resulting in one more than 2022. Between 2020 – 2023, the average number of permits issued per year has been 298. This past year more permits were issued in March and December than those same months in 2022. July typically averages 20 to 25 permits but in 2023 that number spiked at 52. This was the highest number of permits issued in any month since tracking began in 2001. Single family home permits totaled 26 compared to 32 in the prior year. Commercial activity totaled 18 permits compared to 11 during 2022. Zoning fees were \$41,200, up by \$11,932 from 2022. Residential improvements continued in large numbers (167) somewhat higher than 2022 and included additions, fences, porches, decks, docks and accessory buildings and pools. This positive, seemingly never-ending trend continually points to relocation and retirement to our area with improvements versus starting anew. The Board of Zoning Appeals heard 46 cases (five more than 2022) and the Zoning Commission heard 4 cases, three less than 2022. Mrs. Dale responded to 6,300 calls, emails and in-person inquiries, went on 893 site visits and sent 50 violation letters. Nearly forty representatives from 14 different jurisdictions within a four-county area attended a well-received BZA training session at township hall. Mrs. Dale assists businesses seeking to locate or expand in the township and works closely with commercial and residential developers, business owners and residential property owners to design projects that will add to the township's economic, environmental and social well-being. In addition, she is in regular contact with the trustees to recommend and research the abatement of abandoned and dilapidated structures as the general fund budget allows. The department's goals for 2024 include a formal storage building study in conjunction with Miami University, prioritizing and creating a plan for dilapidated structures and beginning preparations for the 2025 Comprehensive Land Use Plan update.

Township newsletters are published twice each year typically just prior to spring and again in summer. They are mailed several weeks in advance of township clean-ups and are available for viewing on the website after they are produced. Current news and pertinent information along with all contact information is on our website [www.danburytownship.com](http://www.danburytownship.com). Elected officials and department heads are available to the public via phone or email.

Our staff continues to review expenditures closely to provide the best service at the most reasonable cost to our residents. Applying for grants to various organizations is an ongoing process here at the township. We were fortunate to again receive funds from the Ottawa County Park District for improvements to Meadowbrook Marsh including much anticipated new paved trails. A story walk was installed at Meadowbrook by the library. The main entrance to Meadowbrook along with the driveway and most of the parking lot was paved with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. The balance of the parking area will be paved during 2024 with cost-share grant funding from the Park District. Meadowbrook now hosts

warbler walks each May and the annual pumpkin walk in October. We are planning to install a tennis court with pickleball behind township hall in the not too distant future. We again received grant funding from our risk management insurance company toward safety expenses. In August, a very well-attended Wolcott family reunion was held at the Keeper's House on Bayshore Road. Fiscal Officer Carolyn Adams and Assistant Fiscal Officer Lynne James continue to work diligently to keep the financial side of township business up to speed and in compliance. John Paul Dress, Dave Hirt and I work very hard to meet the continual growing needs of your township. Please do not hesitate to call any of us with your questions, concerns and ideas.

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