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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING TOWNSHIP EMPLOYEES AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

Kristy Aiken, Office Coordinator, 10 years

Glen Cobb, Fire Dept. Lieutenant, 6 years

Chris Collier, Firefighter, 6 years

Chris Samborn, Firefighter, 6 years

Chris Cheng, Project Manager, 1 year

Andrew Houde, Fire Chief, 5 years

Lance Baird, Fire Dept. Lieutenant, 11 years

CLERK'S COLUMN

The federal administration's assault on human rights, climate science, and democratic institutions is well organized and, so far, unrelenting. We must continue to hold our elected officials accountable, engage in peaceful protest, and forcefully reject these unjust federal policies at every turn we can. The federal administration is injecting these disastrous federal policies into our educational institutions, state governments, and local governments. I have my eyes wide open about the potential disastrous impacts on Township services and the well-being of our residents that we may see in the coming months and years. **The Township Board is making contingency plans for some of the most immediate impacts but our work to improve Scio Township continues:** we will continue to implement forward thinking programs based on well informed plans.

In the first months of 2025, the Board of Trustees adopted a comprehensive 6-year Capital Improvements Plan and a Township Budget

for Fiscal Year April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026. The Capital Plan is comprehensive and the Budget is well considered. Find these documents on the Township website at sciotownship.org/finance. The Board of Trustees and Township staff worked together through a budget process that has become more inclusive and sophisticated over the last few years, this year's being the best process yet. Special thanks to Trustee Kathleen Brant who presented the budget to the Township Board and facilitated major decision points.

One set of decisions bears a deeper explanation. The Board of Trustees adopted a General Fund budget for 2025-26 that relies on the General Fund reserve—dipping into the reserves to meet the extraordinary need presented this year. Pursuant to the Township's *Order of Resource Use and Fund Balance Policy*, the Board of Trustees approved a budget that draws the unrestricted fund balance of the General Fund below the required policy minimum of 100% of the following year's operating expenditures.

BY JESSICA M. FLINTOFT, CLERK

Scio's policy establishes a required minimum that is higher than that of most municipalities and allows the Township to draw below that minimum only for narrowly defined reasons. The Board of Trustees stated two such reasons for this authorization for the upcoming Fiscal Year: 1) planned legal defense expenses in *State of Michigan v Kerry (Case #2024-24F3-0828-FY)*, the false criminal charges filed against the current Township Supervisor; and 2) planned use of reserves for part of the costs to replace the Township Hall's HVAC system. The other part of the costs to replace the HVAC may be funded through federal revenue from an IRS Elective Pay Program. But, to account for the possibility that the federal administration might stop payments that would otherwise be properly disbursed, the Board of Trustees voted to assign \$603,200 of General Fund fund balance to be disbursed in the event the revenue from the IRS is not received.

In these extraordinary times, please know that your local government, staff employees and elected officials alike, is committed to doing our best for the people of Scio Township. And that means, above all, serving all of our residents fairly and with kindness. Scio Township Hall continues to welcome all residents to pop in to ask a question, get a document notarized, or attend a public meeting. **No matter your immigration status, national origin, ancestry, religion, race, color, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability: we are your public servants, and you are welcome here.** Please reach out at any time to provide your insights, suggestions, and questions.



Scio Township Clerk Jessica Flintoft swears in newly appointed Trustee David Read at the March 11, 2025 meeting of the Board of Trustees. Read ran for the office of Trustee in 2024 and came in fifth in a field that could only hold four nominees. He replaces Judy DeVooght Moenck, who resigned on February 28.

MICHIGAN IS A NATIONAL LEADER IN SECURE AND ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

The 2024 General Election was the third consecutive Michigan election with record-breaking voter turnout. Nearly 80% of all active registered voters cast a ballot last November. Michigan had the third-highest turnout rate in the nation among eligible voters – more than 10 points above the national average. – **Office of the Michigan Secretary of State**

LETTER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

With the passage of the Fire Station 2 millage question last fall, we have been hard at work preparing for the start of the project. As this article is being written in early March, we are scheduling interviews with several Architects and Construction Managers. We are evaluating their past and current projects, their records of success, and their costs. **The objective of this process is to give residents a quality product (a state-of-the-art fire station) at a fair price.** The Requests for Proposals were distributed throughout the state and received a very good response. Update: The Board of Trustees approved an Architect and a

Construction Manager at the March 25 meeting and authorized the Supervisor and Clerk to sign the negotiated contracts.

Not long ago, the Township Board of Trustees authorized the Fire Department to purchase a smaller off-road vehicle for firefighting/EMS use within the community. We currently use a brush truck for outdoor fires that are inaccessible to conventional fire vehicles. Spring is the peak time for brush fires in the community, which often occur far from roads or driveways where our large engines can drive. Our brush truck is useful for some of these areas, but its size and weight prevent it from getting into many areas in the community. Our new vehicle,

BY ANDREW HOUDE, CHIEF,
SCIO TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

which is equipped with a small fire pump and a 70-gallon water tank, can now get us to outdoor fires faster than we could before. The vehicle also has equipment to get sick or injured people from these inaccessible areas to an ambulance.

This will be a great asset for Scio parks, preserves, and pathways, which can be far from the road, as well as the larger private properties and farms in the community.

The Fire Department is grateful to the Board of Trustees for its continued support of our mission to protect and preserve life and property in Scio Township.

DEXTER SCHOOLS' SPECIAL ELECTION MAY 6, 2025

A Special Election has been called by the Dexter School District for May 6, 2025. The issue on the ballot is a Dexter Schools Improvement Bond Proposal. **This election will include only those voters in the Dexter School District.** In

Scio Township, only voters in Precinct #2 are in the Dexter School District. Scio Township will be reimbursed by the Dexter School District for all costs of this election by the Dexter Schools. Find the official ballot language at Michigan.gov/vote or view a sample ballot in the Clerk's Office.

BY BARBARA CALLEJA, DEPUTY CLERK

Not yet registered to vote in Scio Township?

You can register online at Michigan.gov/vote through Monday, April 21. From Tuesday, April 22 through Election Day, registration must occur in person at the Scio Township Clerk's office. Please bring proof of residency. The Scio Township Clerk's office is located in Scio Township Hall, 827 N. Zeeb Rd. Regular office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 am-4 pm. **The Clerk offers additional weekend hours on Saturday, May 3 and Sunday, May 4 from 9 am-4 pm.**

Scio Township typically has a history of high voter turnout, but the turnout for the last Special Election held for Dexter schools was only 19.2% in August of 2017. Scio voters in Precinct 2 need to show up to make decisions that directly impact their community. In the words of Sharon Salzberg, "Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country and this world."

VOTING OPTIONS:

- **Vote by Absentee Ballot:** Any voter may request an absentee ballot at Michigan.gov/vote or by contacting (734) 369-9400 or sending an email to clerk@sciotownship.org. Scio Township offers two ballot drop boxes to conveniently return your ballot, located at:

Township Hall, 827 N. Zeeb Rd. and
Scio Foods, 6950 Jackson Rd.

These secure drop boxes are checked daily by the Clerk's Office.
- **Vote on Election Day:** Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 7 am-8 pm at Precinct 2, Kiwanis Club, 100 North Staebler Road.

Early Voting will not be offered for this special election.



Ballot Drop Box located at 6950 Jackson Rd

JACKSON ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY

Jackson Road is the commercial heart of Scio Township, but the corridor lacks a clear identity, safe walkways, and connected bike paths. Over the past ten years, new development has expanded into Scio Township that lacks character and is car-oriented. However, with recent additions such as breweries, coworking spaces, and mixed-use housing, the Township is on its way to establishing Jackson Road as a unique destination for residents and visitors alike.

The Jackson Road Corridor Study seeks to create a bold vision for the corridor's future, and we need the input of businesses and residents alike!

The Township is developing a plan that will build upon previous planning efforts, identify opportunities to improve traffic safety, enhance walking and biking connections, and create a vision to guide future investments along Jackson Road.

The Township will be using public events, social media, and surveys to ensure you have a chance to make your voice heard about this project. The feedback you provide will help shape Jackson Road into a corridor that reflects

BY OHM ADVISORS AND THE JACKSON ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY TEAM

the Township's vision, now and in the future. Scan the QR code below or type sciotownship.org/jacksonroad into your browser to share your input and to stay up-to-date on the progress of this project.



REGULAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

All meetings are held in Township Hall, 827 N Zeeb Rd, unless otherwise indicated.

Board of Trustees meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.

Downtown Development Authority meets on the second Monday of every other month at noon.

Environmental Sustainability Task Force meets on the first Thursday of every month, online only.

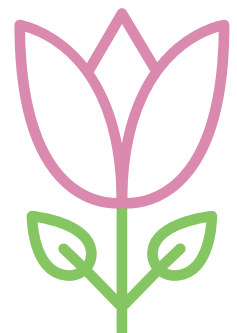
Land Preservation Commission meets on the second Thursday of every month at 4 pm.

Parks, Preserves, and Pathways Committee meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 4 pm.

Planning Commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of the month at 7 pm.

Roads Advisory Committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm.

Zoning Board of Appeals meets monthly; check the schedule at sciotownship.org/ZBA.



FROM THE UTILITIES DIRECTOR

THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR UTILITIES

Your elected Board of Trustees has carefully reviewed and vetted all recommendations for the Utility Department in the updated 2026-31 Capital Improvement Plan. Each project was evaluated for its importance and impact while considering the financial implications. Below are some of the planned capital improvements that have earned Board support. For a full list please visit the Township website for Plans under sciotownship.org/finance.

METRON METERS

Scio Township is entering the second year of mandatory water meter replacements with Metron meters. So far, nearly 1,000 new or replaced meters have been installed. This ongoing effort ensures accurate water-usage tracking and improved efficiency. Residents, please call the Scio Township Utilities Department at 734-369-9350 to schedule your water meter replacement.

SEWER CLEANING AND TELEVISING

Scio Township is beginning the second year of its sewer cleaning and televising program. Last year, work was completed in Walnut Ridge and most of the Uplands District. This year, the focus will be on the area in and around Polo Fields. Thank you for your cooperation as we continue this essential maintenance.

JACKSON ROAD PUMP STATION GENERATOR REPLACEMENT

Scio Township will be replacing the original Jackson Road Pump Station generator, which has been in service for over 30 years. This upgrade is essential to ensure reliable operation during power outages. Work is scheduled to begin this spring!

BY BRANDON MCNIEL,
UTILITIES DIRECTOR

JACKSON ROAD PUMP STATION UPGRADES/ SEWER FORCE MAIN

Township consultants OHM-Advisors will be investigating the best options to upgrade Scio Township's main pump station to handle increased sewer flow. They will also explore options for pumping sewage to the City of Ann Arbor in case of a force main failure, as no redundancy currently exists in the system. The current timeline for these solutions to be implemented is approximately three years. This planning is essential for future reliability and capacity.

JACKSON ROAD METER PIT

OHM will begin designing engineering plans and technical specifications to replace Scio Township's 30+-year-old meter pit and main water feed valve. This proactive work ensures a smooth replacement next year, securing a reliable water supply for the future.

HOW'S YOUR SEPTIC?

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy has teamed up with Michigan Saves, the nation's first non-profit green bank to offer **low-cost loans to homeowners who need to repair or replace their failing septic systems**. State-wide it is estimated that more than 20% of Michigan's 1.3 million septic systems are failing. Old septic systems beyond their life expectancy, outdated system designs and installations, improper use or overuse, and lack of maintenance can lead to untreated wastewater rising to surface water or into groundwater, potentially exposing people and animals to harmful bacteria and viruses. With the cost of a replacement septic system ranging from \$8,000 to \$30,000, low-interest loans to help finance these projects is a welcome benefit of Public Act 53 of 2022. The Septic Replacement Loan Program (SRLP) launched in the summer of 2023 and has resulted in thousands of gallons of sewage per day being safely and adequately treated so clean water can re-enter the environment. For more information on the SRLP, go to MichiganSaves.org/septic.

SPRING CLEAN-UP?

Sounds great! Don't let your spring clean-up contribute to water or ground pollution. Dispose of your home toxics through the County Home Toxics Collection Center located at 705 N. Zeeb Road (next to Township Hall). **Collection days are held most Saturdays April - November**. Check out their schedule, find out what materials they take, and register for an appointment at www.washtenaw.org/287, or call 734-222-3950. The Huron River Watershed Council has a great resource for safe disposal of common items containing toxic material, safe prescription medication disposal, and cleaning with natural materials (smells better, costs less, and is better for you and the environment!). Their site is hrwc.org/hometoxics.

SPRING UPDATE - ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Roads Advisory Committee researches and addresses a range of issues related to the Township's network of local roads; formulates plans for road maintenance and improvements, evaluates funding options, and collaborates with the Township project manager, the Washtenaw County Road Commission, and/or outside contractors on projects. RAC does take into consideration public input regarding road issues. However, for maintenance issues such as potholes, plowing, grading, etc., contact Washtenaw County Road Commission at wcroads.org.

Each year, the Roads Advisory Committee (RAC) works with the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) to establish which roads will be improved during the coming construction season. **We are currently working on the 2025 road project list.** RAC is also putting the final touches on a guide

for residents, "Special Assessment Nuts & Bolts for Public Roads." This guide will help residents initiate and successfully complete a Special Assessment District (SAD) to pay for paving their neighborhood gravel roads. This important document, along with the "Special Assessment Policy for Public Roads," also nearing completion, will provide processes that lead to improved local roads. When they are available, you will find those documents on the Township website at SciotoTownship.org/RoadsAdvisoryCommittee.

RAC meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm in the Township Hall. The public is encouraged to attend either in person or via Zoom. The link and the agenda materials are on the Township website, sciotoTownship.org.

Washtenaw County Road Commission has a very robust site for all information about our

BY CAROLINE ALTOMARE AND PATRICK SHIELDS, RAC MEMBERS

roads at wcroads.org. For Scio, hover over the tab "Doing Business with WCRC" at the top of the home page and select "Townships" from the drop-down menu. Click on Scio Township and you have a wealth of information on local projects, safety, contacts, etc. There is also an app available for your mobile device called "WCRC Fix It." Or type wcroads.org/residents/report-an-issue into your browser.



PLANNING AND ZONING FOR YOUR DREAM PROJECT

Are you a homeowner thinking about building a deck, an addition, or a shed? Are you thinking about opening a business in Scio Township or planning to expand your existing business? Scio Township works with the Washtenaw County Building Department, and all projects that require a building permit (decks, building additions, interior improvements, etc.) first need to obtain zoning compliance approval from the Township.

This spring the Planning and Zoning section of the Township website has been

updated to make complying with Township ordinances governing these activities easier than ever. **Check out the landing page at sciotoTownship.org/planning-to-get-started. This page will link you to every procedure, ordinance, policy, and application you need to get building in Scio.** Click on one tab if you are a homeowner or a business owner, or a contractor working for either. Choose another tab if you are in the early planning stages and need to examine the Township Master Land Use Plan, zoning ordinance and the official Zoning Map, to find a likely location for your new home

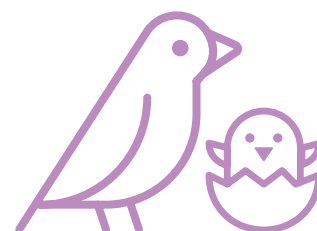
BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR

or business. Check out the Current Projects tab if you want to find out what the construction project near you is all about. You can also explore how the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals are involved in this process.

The Township Planner is available Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at Township Hall, by appointment. Call 734-369-9400 or email lkreps@sciotoTownship.org to make an appointment, or ask a question.

TOWNSHIP HALL CHANGES

Look for construction this summer at Township Hall—we are getting a new HVAC system that includes geothermal, we are renovating a public restroom for park-goers accessible on the east side of the building, and Township Hall Park will enjoy an upgrade to its walking trail.



FOOD IS CULTURE...HEALTH...COMMUNITY

Spring is the perfect time to engage with our local food system. Choosing local, healthy, and environmentally responsible food helps promote both personal health and Scio's rural character.

Eating locally sourced food is simply better for the environment and supports the local economy.

Fewer carbon miles, less packaging, less mono-cropping, and no chemicals to eliminate pests, enhance growth, or prolong shelf life. Sustainable practices used by local farmers promote cleaner air and water and healthier soil. Regenerative agriculture stores CO₂, encourages biodiversity, and protects pollinators that are vital to healthy ecosystems. Fruits and veggies lose nutrients during transportation, processing, and storage. But local foods retain the maximum nutrients, help eliminate chemicals from your diet and ultimately taste better. **Scio and the surrounding area have multiple farm-to-your-table options to choose from!**



FARMS IN SCIO THAT HAVE SEASONAL SALES, STANDS OR CSAS

Blue Spring Farm

4710 Stein bluespringfarm.net

HoneyBee U-Pick

5700 Scio Church Rd. tantrefarm.com

Nature & Nurture Seeds

7100 Marshall Rd, Dexter
natureandnurtureseeds.com

Seva Farms and Skinny Farm

2279 Scio Rd
Sevafarm.com

Vestergaard Farms and Market

4408 S. Wagner
vestergaardfarms.com

White Lotus Farms

7217 W. Liberty
whitelotusfarms.com

Wing Farms

5335 Dexter-Ann Arbor Rd wingfarms.com

Aggregated Farm Box Option

Hungry Locavore Box Pick-up
Sat. 9-11 at Dozer Coffee
112 Jackson Plaza
thehungrylocavore.com

Did we miss your farm?

Email pcchair@sciotownship.org

For a regional list go to:

localharvest.org/ann-arbor-mi

BY JAN CULBERTSON,
PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

NEARBY FARMS THAT HAVE SEASONAL SALES, STANDS OR CSAS

Slow Farm Organic

4700 Whitmore Lake Rd, Ann Arbor
slowfarmandfriends.com

Garden Fort

10025 Easton Rd, Dexter
gardenfort@gmail.com

Jacob's Fresh Farm

475 N. Fletcher Rd, Dexter
jacobsfreshfarm.com

Rustic Roots Farm

7995 Scully Rd, Dexter
rusticrootsfarm.com

Dexter Blueberry Farm

11040 Beach Rd, Dexter
dexterblueberry.com



Green Things Farm Collective

3825 Nixon Rd, Ann Arbor
greenthingsfarm.com

Mariella Field & Flora

10203 Easton Rd, Dexter
mariellafield.com

FARMERS MARKETS

Ann Arbor Farmers Market, 315 Detroit St

Dexter Farmers Market, 3233 Alpine

Chelsea Farmers Market, 305 S Main St

Westside Farmers Market, 2501 Jackson Rd

FIREWORKS

For lovers of the flash-bang, here is a reminder of the Township regulations governing dates it is legal to discharge consumer-grade fireworks this summer:

The Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Memorial Day until 11:45 pm on each of those days.

June 29 to July 4 until 11:45 pm on each of those days.

July 5, if that date is a Friday or Saturday, until 11:45 pm



ATTENTION GREENSPACE LOVERS!

Do you appreciate all the peaceful green spaces in Scio Township—and the clean air and water quality the natural landscape helps to protect? Are you grateful to have working farms in our community that produce healthy



Van Curler Preserve (trailhead off Joy Road), credit Liz Wiseman.

meat, produce, and fruits? Well, good news! **You can help protect our community's natural landscape and heritage by volunteering for the Scio Land Preservation Commission**, which is now celebrating its 20th year in our community.

The seven-member Land Preservation Commission (LPC) meets once a month to evaluate applications from landowners to conserve their property in perpetuity through land-conservation easements. A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement between a landowner and a government agency or land trust to limit how the land may be used. Conservation easements protect the land's conservation values, such as scenic views, water quality, and natural habitats.

The LPC also oversees an innovative Buy, Protect, Sell program, through which our Township buys properties deemed highly important to conserve, protects them through a land-conservation easement, and then re-sells them at a discounted price to a tax-paying landowner who agrees to use the land according to the conservation agreement.

BY LISA PAPPAS AND LIZ WISEMAN,
LPC CO-CHAIRS

Over the past 20 years — using dedicated funding from a voter-supported millage — the LPC has completed 37 land conservation projects. The total land area protected is 1,709 acres, with 45 percent of that land in natural features (woods, streams, and wetlands). Seventeen of these properties are publicly accessible as parks, preserves, or pathways.

If furthering land preservation efforts in Scio is something you'd like to be involved in, use the form at sciotownship.org/join to apply and submit a letter of interest and resume. Your resume need not be fancy! A simple document outlining your work and volunteer history is acceptable. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the LPC and this service opportunity, please contact LPC Co-Chairs Lisa Pappas at lapappas@umich.edu or Liz Wiseman at edevinewiseman@gmail.com.

HURON RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

In recent weeks we have seen actions purported to improve our national economy that have real and dangerous consequences for people and nature. **Rollbacks on regulations like lead in water pipes, and PFAS in our drinking water will harm all of us.** Doubling down on fossil fuels and divesting in renewable energy slows our progress on climate change, setting us way back on a crisis that already has us on our heels.

Mission-driven people tend to be a gritty, tenacious bunch. And when the going gets

tough, we get grittier and more tenacious. With you, we will double down on protecting our natural environment for the benefit of all. We will build coalitions among lawmakers and stakeholders to make sure Michigan prioritizes clean water. We will support cities, townships and villages to take actions that protect the river and its watershed. We will work at the intersection of environmental and social movements because we can be stronger together. And we will work to make sure you have the knowledge and resources necessary to run a water-friendly home, advocate for the

BY REBECCA ESSELMAN, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, HURON RIVER WATERSHED
COUNCIL

environment and help fund strategies that set us on a path to a more sustainable future.

HRWC has been working for clean water for 60 years. **We will hold the line on what is important and find ways to reach people to realign around shared values.** Because they are there. When we drown out the noise, focus our energy, and build real connection, we are powerful enough to meet the challenges of our time.

POPKIN CEMETERY

Are you aware that a historic cemetery exists in Scio Township? There are actually a few! Popkin Cemetery is located at 4230 Pratt Rd. and dates back to 1832. Many of you may know it: area walkers and runners sometimes use it as a meditative place to rest.

On February 11, 2025, the Scio Township Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to perpetually care for Popkin Cemetery. **Scio Township has developed a small budget to take on caring for Popkin and possibly other sacred burial grounds.** The Scio Township Parks Department is enthusiastically on board to assist in the yearly maintenance of Popkin.

In October of 2024 nearly 50 volunteers, including members of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), gathered for an initial clean-up of Popkin Cemetery. A local Boy Scout, Jayden Song, worked on Popkin Cemetery as part of his Eagle Scout Badge and

donated the beautiful arch that now decorates the entrance to Popkin. Please go to the Friends of Popkin Cemetery on Facebook to view the amazing Before and After photos of the clean-up effort.

Scio Township's immediate plans for the cemetery include a ceremony honoring Revolutionary War soldier Sylvester Richmond, who is buried in Popkin. **The ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2025, at 2 pm** by the Daughters and Sons of the

BY BARBARA CALLEJA, DEPUTY CLERK

American Revolution, who are providing a new headstone and bronze marker for Richmond.

Future plans for Popkin include installation of a new sign to designate it as an historic cemetery, replacement of the wire fencing with a durable and low-maintenance fence, and contracting with a Sexton to help guide the Township with ongoing care of the cemetery, including repair of the many broken grave markers.



SCIO PARKS, PRESERVES AND PATHWAYS

The Scio Township Board of Trustees recently adopted its first Tree Fund Policy. The Tree Fund is the result of negotiations between the Township Board and developers whose plans entail removing landmark trees. **These funds are then used to mitigate tree loss throughout the Township.** The Tree Fund Plan is projected for six years, with annual evaluation and updates, in concert with the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), and the annual appropriation to be included in the Township's budget. These funds shall be used in Scio Parks and Preserves for foresting consultation, site preparation, pine removal and selling, tree purchase and planting, tree cages, and ongoing maintenance.

On March 11, our Parks Director oversaw a 6.5-acre prairie burn on the **Van Curler Preserve**, located between Huron River Drive and Joy



Road north of Dexter-Huron Metro Park. The controlled burn removed various non-native plant species in the prairie area. Next steps for remediation of this preserve include spreading native seed mixes and installing bird nesting boxes. Use the QR code to access drone aerial footage of the burn.

Thank you to those who attended and volunteered their time at the **February Volunteer Mixer event held at Township Hall**. This event was held to introduce prospective volunteers to the parks and preserves. On behalf of the Parks Department,

BY CHRIS CHENG, PROJECT MANAGER

we look forward to working with you! On the March 15 volunteer day held at **Liberty Pond Nature Area**, located east of S. Parker off West Liberty, six bluebird nest boxes were installed. Each nest box was cleared of invasive species to promote the use of the boxes by bluebirds. Special thanks to those who volunteered.

Seasonal staff will soon begin the work of maintaining and upgrading the park experience for residents and visitors. They also plan to coordinate Workdays on Saturdays from May through September. Please visit sciotownship.org/sciooutside to find out about events in the parks and to volunteer. Future volunteer opportunities for vernal pool-, butterfly-, and nest box-monitoring are forthcoming.

SPOTLIGHT ON AURORA NORTHRUP, HR MANAGER

BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR

Aurora Northrup is the first Human Resources employee in Scio Township government history. As such, a big job awaited her when she was hired on in the winter of 2023. Aurora is fiercely protective of personnel records, and her first priority was to secure the records of Township employees, past and present. During her first months on the job, Aurora focused on creating an automated hiring system, including Board-approved job descriptions. She is proud of the work she did, with help from Fire Administrative Assistant Terry Soave, to create a user-friendly job application process on the website. (Check it out at sciotownship.org/employment.) Aurora continues to update the Employee Handbook, getting rid of outdated

terminology, and adding information covering employment policies, and benefit details. This is the kind of work that HR professionals excel in: making sure all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed.

Fundamentally, the work of Human Resources is to make sure all employees are treated fairly and equally. That goal is what can make the HR department the most (and the least!) popular with employees. Let's face it, we all want an exception to the rules sometimes. That's why it's so helpful to have someone like Aurora, with more than 20 years' experience in this field, as our HR manager. Some employees need to blow off steam, some need information, some need correction, others need advocacy. "You need to have broad

shoulders," Aurora explains. "I'm here for all of it."

All this adds up to the professionalization of the Township workforce. New and long-term employees both benefit from the work Aurora does: everything from an online fillable job application to clear and accurate job descriptions, pay and benefits on par with market rates, and new employee onboarding has been created or updated by her hand.

Staff and elected officials both are finally experiencing what HR professionals call consistency of processes: all are being treated fairly and have someone to go to when things go awry. Thank you Aurora!

THE DEXTER SENIOR CENTER IS FOR EVERYONE!

Located on the main floor of the Dexter Wellness Center, at 2810 Baker Road, the Senior Center offers meals, exercise classes, games and activities for anyone over 55. Annual membership is \$25 and scholarships are available for both membership and meals. **Meals on Wheels is available, and the Washtenaw Area Value Express offers door-to-door service.** Don't live in Dexter? That's no excuse! All are welcome. LGBTQIA+ friendly. "Our mission is to provide programs and services which enable members to remain an active and integral part of the community and to empower them to retain their independence, dignity, and sense of well-being." The Dexter Senior Center anticipates moving to a standalone building on the same site this summer. Call 734-426-7737 for all programs and to volunteer, or 734-253-2370 for information on meals. Or visit dexterseniors.org.

GET THE JUMP ON INVASIVES

In 2024, lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), a spring ephemeral plant found in forest floodplains, was added to Michigan's watch list. This plant spreads rapidly, appears very early in spring and hides underground well before summer's heat begins, making it extremely difficult to eliminate once established. Consider downloading the MISIN: Report Invasive Species smartphone app to learn about and help capture your field observations on local invasive plants and animals. You can also subscribe to michigan.gov/egle/outreach to find out about environmental classes and webinars, brochures and conferences from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.



SAVE THE DATE - JUNE 7 NATIVE PLANT EXPO & MARKETPLACE

Join the Washtenaw County Conservation District for the 6th annual Native Plant Expo & Marketplace on Saturday, June 7, at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road. Now offering an "Early Bird Hour" from 8 am to 9 am, tickets are available for just \$5 each, kids under 10 are free. The main event is free to the public from 9 am to 1 pm.

WELCOME KEITH DE ZWAAN

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Scio Township is fortunate to have attracted Keith De Zwaan (pronounced Dez-wan), a 24-year veteran of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, to be our new Code Enforcement Officer. Keith started on February 18 and is in the office during regular business hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. If you see an ordinance violation in your area, such as an abandoned car, an unleashed dog, sidewalks full of snow, and the like, send an email to Keith at kdezwaan@sciotownship.org, call 734-369-9400, or



complete the form at sciotownship.org/code. Keith is a chatty fellow who would rather educate residents on what they can and cannot

BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR

do than issue citations. He has spent his first weeks on the job devising a process to reduce paperwork, streamline the process of getting complaints answered, and making the resulting data accessible. He will not be handling complaints about residential waste and recycling. For those complaints, complete the online form at sciotownship.org/waste. Keith is delighted to be helping out with ordinance compliance here in Scio, where he was at times assigned as a Sheriff's deputy in the past: "I'm grateful for the opportunity to work here in Scio, making this wonderful township a cleaner, safer place for all."

WELCOME FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL SIMPSON

Michael Simpson is a licensed EMS and paramedic who joined the Scio Township Fire Department on January 14. Those first couple of weeks were jam-packed with orientation, online trainings, driving each township-owned vehicle, and starting to learn the area. Now Michael is on the typical firefighter shift—24 hours every third day—along with the rest of the team at the STFD. Michael comes to Scio from Clinton Township, which is the largest township in the state of Michigan, comprised of more than 100,000 residents. Clinton Township is also his home, where nearby relatives help with his young family, including spouse and two children, aged three and one. Michael has connected with a number of other firefighters in the Department who also have young families, and they have bonded over tales of sleepless nights and the emotional roller-coaster of



life with toddlers. Sometimes the 45-minute commute is worth it!

Michael first heard about Scio Township in the summer of 2024, from a flyer that included information on the ballot proposal for Station # 2. He got the impression that the Scio Township Fire Department "is really moving forward,

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there are lots of opportunities." He could tell that "the future is bright" in Scio. **Passage of the funding millage in November promises a dozen years of financial security for the Department, and he is grateful for the support from residents who voted for it, and from the Board,** which has demonstrated support for the Fire Department. Michael has wanted to be a firefighter ever since he was three years old, and he had the firefighter Halloween costume to prove it; taking a cadet class in high school only confirmed that this was the right career for him. He is enjoying learning the roads and meeting the people of Scio, who are so good to firefighters even when they meet during times of such duress. "Your support is appreciated," he says, "and I look forward to helping anyone who needs it."



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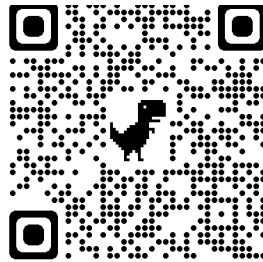
USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

TOWNSHIP HALL

827 N Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor
(734) 369-9400
Hours: Mon-Fri, 8 am – 4 pm
sciotownship.org

OFFICERS

Supervisor Jillian Kerry
jkerry@sciotownship.org
Clerk Jessica Flintoft
jflintoft@sciotownship.org
Treasurer Ryan Yaple
ryaple@sciotownship.org
Trustee Kathleen Brant
kbrant@sciotownship.org
Trustee Kathleen Knol
kknol@sciotownship.org
Trustee David Read
dread@sciotownship.org
Trustee John Reiser
jreiser@sciotownship.org
Office Coordinator Kristy Aiken
kaiken@sciotownship.org
townshipboard@sciotownship.org



FIRE STATION

1055 N Zeeb Rd
Business line (734) 665-6001
Emergencies 911
sciotownship.org/fire

Fie Chief Andrew Houde
ahoude@sciotownship.org
Fire Marshal Brandon Sears
bsears@sciotownship.org

UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

827 N Zeeb Rd
Billing (734) 369-9351
After-hours emergency (734) 651-4770

Director Brandon McNiel
bmcniel@sciotownship.org
sciotownship.org/utilities

Loch Alpine Sanitary Authority
Billing (248) 433-8904
Water/Sewer emergency (248) 433-8904
<https://lasawater.org>

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Director Murphy Harrington
mharrington@sciotownship.org
Project Manager Chris Cheng
ccheng@sciotownship.org

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

Assessor Andrea Garrett
algarrett@sciotownship.org
Code Enforcement Officer Keith De Zwaan
kdezwaan@sciotownship.org

DEXTER-ANN ARBOR RUN

It's not too early to start getting ready for the Dexter-Ann Arbor Run. Half-marathon, 10k, and 5k runners and walkers are all welcome! June 1. Get more information and register at <https://dxa2.com>.



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