

Town activities for the past 12 months, 4/21-4/22

Tillengast Cemetery was cleaned up and roads graveled, a small parking area created, dead trees removed, overgrown lilac bushes cut out, and some old gravestones uncovered.

A washout on Townline road at Horseshoe Lake was repaired after being closed for two years.

Donahue road was graveled.

O'Neil flowage road was widened, graveled, ditched and graded for the first time in many years.

Town shop interior lighting and all outside lighting as well as all town hall fluorescent fixtures were changed over to energy efficient LED lighting.

Several beaver dams that have been in culverts for years in the Mudbrook area have been cleaned out bringing water levels down to prevent flooding of Foster Creek road.

The old plow truck was gone through thoroughly at the Chippewa County shop and had front brakes put on (first time in 18 years), new emergency lighting installed, and other repairs as needed. Additionally the left rear dual wheels were replaced as they were in danger of collapsing.

The town grader had its 2000 hour maintenance done at Chippewa County shops

A speed study was conducted on HWY 40 as a result of the town and the Long Lake District asking D.O.T. to consider a lowered speed limit. Pedestrian crossing and warning signs were installed at Max's and P.J.'s campground as well as two truck hauling warning signs at Town Shop road on Highway 40. These did not cost the town anything. Two pedestrian crossing warning beacons and two interactive radar speed signs were recently approved by D.O.T. for use on highway 40. They are currently on order and should be installed in late May or early June by the county highway department. The town will pay for them and the installation by the county.

Delmore consulting was hired to accurately rate all our roads, culverts, and signage. They produced a comprehensive data base of all items in both book and computer form.

Mail delivery to the town hall was established for the first time ever. A secure mail receptacle was installed and mail delivery has gone smoothly over the past 12 months.

Phone lines on the outside of the hall were replaced and rerouted to avoid potential for future damage.

QuickBooks accounting system was purchased and was implemented fully in 2022 to replace handwritten records. This allows computer printing of checks and the ability to easily recall any financial records without having to look through written records to find them. Custom reports can be easily generated.

All town boat landings were improved by brushing, graveling, and grading as needed.

Breezy point lake access which was ignored and in disrepair for many years has been cleaned up and restored for public use.

The Town Hall and Shop were thoroughly cleaned up and organized. A large rodent problem was solved and the mess made by it cleaned up. The Clerk/Treasurer totally rearranged her office and brightened up the entire Town Hall considerably at a very low cost. Most items added were either free, from garage sales, or from Hope Gospel thrift center.

The Town budget was reorganized and simplified for easier tracking of expenses

One mile of 290th avenue was repaved and a major culvert on Cedar Creek was replaced using the county bridge petition that pays for half the \$20,000+ cost of it.

Musky drive was brushed and repaved.

ARPA funds were applied for and received in the amount of \$96,000. The federal government recently completed their final rules on what these funds can be used for. To simplify things, they stated that funds up to ten million dollars can be used for general expenses. The board has thus far decided to upgrade the Town Hall heating system by replacing the 25+ year old furnace and adding central air conditioning plus an air filtration system. Total cost is about \$19,000. The air conditioning should help eliminate a mold problem at the Hall and the air filtration system will cut down on dust on disease issues. Additionally some of the money will be used to pay for the highway 40 signage which has a total cost of about \$18,000 however private funds will cover about \$5,000 of the cost. The remaining funds remain undesignated at this point but the town has until 2024 to decide how to use the rest of them.

Gravel was added to the shoulders of several roads for first time in several years

The Chippewa County highway department hot mix trailer was borrowed (no cost for trailer, just paid for hot mix and propane which together ran about \$200 per time) in spring and fall for the first time to enable efficient hot mix patching of roads. This was possible as the new pickup we purchased this last year was properly equipped to handle this trailer.

Several trees overhanging the salt shed were removed. They were actually touching the roof and would have ruined the shingles in a short time. They also shaded the west side of the building so the roof never dried out completely. The shed was also repainted for the first time in over twenty years and several boards were repaired or replaced on the siding.

Compressed air was piped to two locations in the Town shop and air hose reels were installed to allow easier use of air powered tools.

A switch to turn on the shop interior lights was added by the west door of the shop so that employees entering when it is dark out could safely walk through the shop. This was a safety item that was omitted when the shop was built for whatever reason. Also, a night light was added over the outside of the west shop door as it was very dark between the two buildings at night.

All exterior locks and one interior lock on the hall and the shop were changed. They were replaced with pushbutton commercial grade locks which can be reprogrammed as security needs dictate. Several of the exterior doors had the outside handles removed as they are exit only doors which are seldom used.

Several culverts were replaced on several different roads. All those replaced were either failing or close to failing.

A laptop computer was purchased for our road patrolman to bring him into the modern world. He can now easily check the weather on radar, send and receive emails, and browse other sites as needed for his job. He was also given the unused small office that is just off the main Clerk/Treasurer Office plus file cabinets were gotten to allow him to organize his paperwork.

The service window between the Clerk/Treasurer's Office and the Town Hall meeting room was significantly expanded to allow easier access for the public. No outside labor was used.

Hours for tax collection were significantly expanded to allow the public to more easily pay their taxes any time the Clerk/Treasurer was present at the office. She even came in at odd time when requested by the public to facilitate their payment of their taxes.

We also now have a very good working relationship with the Chippewa County Highway Department. They have been most helpful to us in maintaining our equipment, allowing us to borrow some of their equipment, providing expertise on road issues, and working with our Town to provide us good pricing on gravel and other needed supplies such as DEF fluid for our newer diesel equipment and plow blades to name a few. All of their help is greatly appreciated.

The Town began replacing the older tile type fire numbers with the newer style red and white vertical signs preferred by the first responders. About fifty were replaced and another fifty were made up ready to place later this year. An additional one hundred sign blades were ordered and will hopefully be placed later this year as well. There were about 780 older signs to replace according to the county mapping office.

A new mower tractor was ordered to replace the sixteen year old mower tractor. Delivery is expected in July. The old tractor is a 96 horsepower, 2 wheel drive unit with a four foot flail mower attached to a sixteen foot boom. It is capable of cutting brush up to four inches in diameter. It is belt driven, which is a constant issue in heavy brush. The flail mower is not really designed for straight finish grass mowing. The new tractor is a 155 horsepower, 4 wheel drive unit. It is being equipped with a twenty-one foot boom with a direct hydraulically driven (no belts) brush head capable of cutting up to eight inch diameter brush. The combination of a five foot longer boom and a four wheel drive tractor will allow safely cutting of brush farther off the roadway to widen some of our roadways out that are in bad need of brushing. Additionally, a six foot side mount grass mower was ordered that can be changed out with the brush mower and boom for normal ditch mowing. This wider unit is designed for grass mowing and will allow us to make only one cut instead of the two we have to make in the spring and fall now with the four foot flail mower to keep the roadway ditches clear. This will save over one hundred miles of mowing each time and it will be faster and safer to use.

Several new tools and pieces of equipment were purchased to allow us to more thoroughly and safely maintain our equipment as well as to equip our road vehicles properly with enough hand tools to take

care of minor maintenance and sign issues while on the road without having to return to the shop each time a problem is noted.

I am probably forgetting some items, but suffice it to say that the Town Board, Clerk/Treasurer, and Road Patrolman have all been very busy this past twelve months. I want to commend everyone for their hard work. We have a good team going and we look forward to having another productive year.

Jim Jerabek
Town Chairperson