

Portland Township News

Fall 2020

773 East Grand River

P.O. Box 314

Portland, MI 48875

www.portlandtownship.org

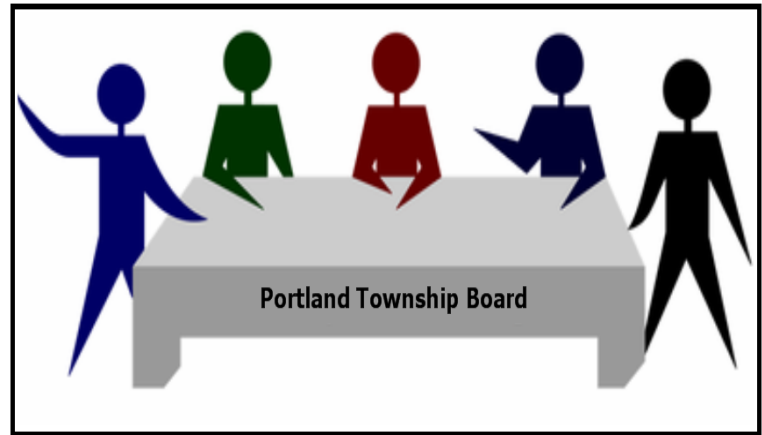
What Does Your Township Board Do?

Portland Township is a general law township whose board consists of five members: a supervisor, a clerk, a treasurer, and two trustees. All five members have equal authority when they are seated in a meeting. The supervisor, clerk, and treasurer have some specific responsibilities at board meetings, but when it comes to participation and acting at those meetings, all members are equal.

The township board is self-governing, administering its own affairs and business. It is independent within the bounds of the constitutional and statutory framework of township authority. Ultimately, a township board and individual board members answer to the voters.

As a governing body, the township board makes the public policy decisions for the township and has legislative authority to carry those decisions forward. The township board is allowed by law to:

- Define, decide, and direct public policy for the township
- Set the tax levies and budget, determine revenues, and control expenditures of township funds
- Appoint officials as directed by statute
- Legislate and enforce township laws (ordinances) within the township for the public health, safety, and welfare



- Exercise planning and zoning authority over land uses
- Determine and operate township programs and services

The clerk and treasurer are required by law to appoint deputies who must take an oath after their appointments. The number one duty of the deputies is to serve as a substitute for the official in case of absence, illness, disability, or death.

Taken from Authorities & Responsibilities of Michigan Townships, published by the Michigan Townships Association, May 2020.

Meet the Portland Township Board

Supervisor Chris Jensen



Chris Jensen was appointed as Supervisor in November 2013 to cover the remaining term of the prior Supervisor who had moved from the Township.

Chris also serves as Treasurer of the Portland Area Fire Authority (PAFA) and as Vice Chairman of the Ionia County Officers Association. He grew up in the Dewitt/Lansing area before taking a job at Tri-County Electric and eventually moving to Portland in 2005.

"Working with the current and past Township Board and PAFA members has been incredibly rewarding. Before being appointed, I had no idea the effort and dedication required by your elected officials and other citizen volunteers to run a township. From procuring new fire engines and emergency services to enforcing ordinances and providing decent roads to drive on. Plus statutory requirements such as collecting taxes, assessing properties and coordinating elections so your voices are heard. Not to mention the effort needed to provide communication and access to the residents we serve. It is truly a team effort!"

Supervisor's Statutory Duties:

- Moderates board and annual meetings
- May serve as assessor, if qualified
- Serves as secretary to the Board of Review
- Maintains records of supervisor's office

- Helps develop township budget
- Appoints some board or commission members
- May call special meetings

Clerk Charlene Keilen

Charlene Keilen and her husband moved into Portland Township in 1997, while building a new home. Her father-in-law (a previous Township Treasurer) encouraged her to run for the Township Clerk position in 2000 when the position opened up. Charlene also works for the State of Michigan.



"Through the use of technology, the election process has changed over the last 20 years, with changes like updated voting scanners and voting absentee in Michigan for no required reason. For help in voting, see the State of Michigan voter site at www.michigan.gov/vote."

Clerk's Statutory Duties:

- Maintains custody of all township records not assigned by law to another office
- Maintains general ledger
- Prepares warrants for township checks
- Records and maintains township meeting minutes
- Keeps the township book of oaths
- Is responsible for special meeting notices

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Meet the Board (continued)

- Publishes board meeting minutes
- Keeps voter registration file and administers election functions
- Keeps township ordinance book
- Prepares some financial statements
- Delivers tax certificates to supervisor and county clerk by specific deadlines
- Must appoint a deputy
- Must post a surety bond

Treasurer Michelle Schneider

Michelle Schneider was appointed to the Township Board in April 2020 and was elected to her first full term in the November 2020 election. She moved to Portland Township five years ago and immediately began looking for ways to get involved in the community. Shelly runs her own home-based business.

“Since I started on April 1, I have learned a lot about how the township works and Michigan statutory law for tax collection and record keeping. I am still learning and will continue to serve the residents to the best of my ability.”



Treasurer’s Statutory Duties:

- Collects real and personal property taxes
- Keeps an account of township revenues and expenditures
- Prepares some financial reports
- Issues township checks
- Receives and deposits all township revenues and payments in approved depositories
- Invests township funds in approved investment vehicles
- Maintains records of treasurer’s office
- Collects delinquent personal property tax
- Is responsible for jeopardy assessments in collecting personal property tax
- Collects mobile home specific tax
- Must appoint a deputy
- Must post a surety bond

Trustee Sue Vanlente

Sue Vanlente was elected as a Trustee to the Township Board in 2012. She has also been a member of the Planning Commission since 1999. Sue has lived in Portland Township since 1971; she is semi-retired, still working a few days per month for PE Office Essentials.

“Serving on the Planning Commission and Township Board has been a great experience. The members of both groups work well together and have the best interests of the residents at the forefront of every decision they make.”



Trustee Mark Simon

Mark Simon was appointed as a Trustee to the Township Board in 2015 and was elected to his first term in 2016. Previous to that, he served on the Planning Commission for 15+ years. He currently serves as the Township liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mark grew up in Portland Township and has lived here almost his entire life. He is retired and operates a small farm in the Township.

“One of my pet projects is the quality of the roads in the Township. Residents can feel free to contact me any time with questions or concerns.”



Trustee’s Statutory Duties:

- Township legislators, required to vote on all issues
- Responsible for township’s fiduciary health

Portland Township Board Meets 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

Supervisor, Chris Jensen

portlandtscjensen@gmail.com
(517) 647-2479

Clerk, Charlene Keilen

portownship@att.net
(517) 647-6643

Treasurer, Shelly Schneider

ptowntreas@gmail.com
(517) 647-2075

Trustee, Sue Vanlente

suevanlente@gmail.com
(517) 575-8000

Trustee, Mark Simon

mgsimon@wowway.com
(517) 647-4892

Planning Commission

Meets first Wednesday of March, June, September and December at 7:00 pm

Chair, Cindy Selden
Secretary, Sue Vanlente (township liaison)
Andrew Huhn
Tony Dixon
Ross Schneider
Marcy Lay
Evelyn Walkington-Jensen

Zoning Board of Appeals Annual Organizational Meeting second Wednesday of each January at 6:00 pm, then as needed.

Kris Bond
Mark Simon (township liaison)
Larry Pung
Marcy Lay
Tom Klein
Alternate, Eileen Main

Board of Review

Meets in December, March, and July

Chris Jensen
Cindy Selden
Nick Sandborn
Matt Robertson
Alternate, Russell Franke
Alternate, Keith Baker

Zoning Administrator

Jeanne Vandersloot
(616) 897-4242
zoningadmin@msn.com

Assessors

Dean and Jason Kohagen
(989) 383-0306
jkohagen@bsasoftware.com

PAMA Board Representatives

Theresa Iskra & John Baker

PAFA Board Representatives

Chris Jensen & Bill Stegenta

Library Board Representatives

Kathy Cook & Russell Franke

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