

West Pottsgrove Township



WINTER 2024

President's Message

I have been approached by people that are new to the Township who have asked me about the origin of Stowe. In 1950 there was a scrap metal business on Glasgow Street near High Street which included a large house built around 1772 by John Potts Jr. which he named "Stowe". The house has been demolished but this is where the name Stowe originated. His father John Potts Sr. was one of the richest men in Pennsylvania and built and lived in Pottsgrove Manor. Today Stowe has a total area of 1.5 square miles and a population of approximately 3800 people.

Trash collection is provided by JP Mascaro and Sons. If you have any problems with your trash pickup, please call the Township to report the issue. We will contact and work with JP Mascaro and Sons to rectify the problem. Trash and recycling collection is every Wednesday, however, if a holiday falls on or before Wednesday, then your collection will take place on a Thursday. Yard waste will continue to be collected by Township staff.

Residents can stay informed about the Township by going on the Township website and by going on ReadyMontco.org to sign up for Township-wide notifications. Both are informative and the ReadyMontco.org notifications will give you information on road closures and other information pertaining to the Township.

Our sanitary sewer replacement project on Anthony Wayne Drive will soon be getting underway. The work should commence by the end of this year and may continue into the first quarter of next year. We also anticipate doing work on Sylvan Drive and East Vine Street in the late summer or early fall of 2024.

The Christmas Tree Lighting was a huge success last year. The chorus will return again this year to sing and entertain those in attendance. Hot chocolate and desserts will be served by our Lions Club volunteers. Santa will be there to say hello. We would like you to join us and make this event even better than last year. Bring your family and friends for a fun time. Mark your calendars for Friday December 1, 2023, at 7 pm at the Township municipal complex. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Please note the Township's new hours are Monday through Thursday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, and Fridays from 7:30 am to 11:30 am. Closed Saturdays and Sundays.

Winter is approaching. It is your responsibility to remove snow from your sidewalk within 24 hours of the end of a snowfall event. Remember as the temperature drops, water on the roadway can freeze causing black ice.

We continue to formulate ideas with the planning committee for the Veteran's Park and moving forward to having another park for the residents to enjoy.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners enjoy the holidays and have a Happy New Year!

Steve Miller, President, Board of Commissioners

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Manager's Report



The beginning of September marked one year for me as manager for the Township and let me just say it has been a very eventful year. We are almost one year into a three-year contract with J.P. Mascaro & Sons for our trash and recycling collection. We got off to a very bumpy start which was not the fault of Mascaro but due to missing information related to past contracts. Mascaro continues to work with the Township to promptly address any resident concerns, which lately are very few and far between. Yard waste will continue to be collected by the Township's Public Works staff on a weekly basis. Please refer to the Township's website for information on this process.

Our Code Enforcement department actively addressed property maintenance issues throughout the year. One major item that was found to be prominent throughout the Township during the growing season was residents not properly maintaining their properties, specifically the side, curb and gutterline areas. It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain these areas and keep them free from grass, weeds, overhanging branches, and debris. Property maintenance is required by the Township Code and those who choose to continue to ignore this will be issued notices of violations, cited, and taken to court, if necessary, until the issues are rectified. This is not a step we want to take. Reach out to the township to discuss as needed. Please be considerate of your neighbors and keep your grass cut. We have many residents who take pride in their properties, and it is not fair that some are not doing their part to keep our community looking nice.

We have been working on several township projects over the last year. Refer to the Parks and Recreation section of the newsletter for updates on the Veteran's Memorial Park and the Old Timer's Field projects. The Anthony Wayne Drive – Von Steuben Drive – Pulaski Street Improvements Project was placed out for public bid in August, bids were received in September and the project was awarded at the beginning of October. We expect this project to be under construction shortly and continue into the first quarter of 2024. This project was awarded \$200,000 in CDBG funding in 2022 to go towards construction costs. Additional funds will be taken from the township sewer capital reserve as budgeted to complete the project. The township also received notification that \$200,000 in 2023 CDBG grant funding will be awarded to assist with the Sylvan Drive – Phase 2 Sanitary Sewer Replacement project. We anticipate preparing this project for construction in late summer of 2024. The township is also pursuing an LSA grant for funding to assist with overall roadway and utility improvements for Fairview Street. This project would be scheduled for 2025 if funding assistance is provided. In addition to the grant funded projects, we will also be completing a couple roadway improvement projects utilizing PennDOT Liquid Fuels and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that has been received over the last two years as part of the 25-year roadway improvement plan. These projects tentatively would include permanent paving for the Anthony Wayne development, Sylvan Drive, and a section of East Vine Street.

Completion of these projects will continue to improve the function of our sanitary sewer, storm sewer and roadway systems which benefits the residents in providing safe roadway travel, proper collection and conveyance of storm runoff, and conveyance of sanitary flows to the treatment plant, in addition to reducing inflow and infiltration into the sanitary systems which helps maintain the capacity of that system.

We will continue to work with the Board of Commissioners, the Public Works department, the Administration, our Engineers, and other municipal managers to identify and prioritize the greatest infrastructure needs within the Township. We will look to find the most cost-effective way to approach these projects in a timely manner whether it be through local, state, or federal grant funding, partnering with adjacent municipalities, our annual budget, donations, fundraising, or a combination.

We have gotten a lot of phone calls about not knowing or hearing about events or information related to township activities and services. We have sent out notifications with the tax bills, posted on Facebook and the website providing information about ReadyMontco. Please refer to the Emergency Management section of the newsletter for information on how to sign up for township-wide notifications. The notifications provided through this service are for emergency and non-priority events. You may elect to receive information via landline, mobile/text message, and/or email. We know not everyone is tech savvy, so this provides our best option to reach as many residents and businesses as possible. We will continue to post to the township website but post to Facebook will be limited.

We encourage all residents to attend monthly BOC meetings which are held on the First and Third Wednesday of each month, unless noted otherwise, at the Township Building at 7pm. This allows residents the opportunity to comment on Township events and decisions. Participation at meetings will deter misinformation spread on social media platforms.

continued on page 4

Manager's Report *continued from page 3*

In addition to the monthly meetings, we will continue to utilize the Township website and Facebook page to upload meeting minutes, meeting agendas, meeting schedules, upcoming events, road closures, weather advisories, etc. We are working to continually update the website to provide a user-friendly tool for residents to obtain or view pertinent Township information.

The most difficult news for me to share is the recent passing of Commissioner Thomas Palladino in late September. This community has lost a huge pillar and a wealth of never-ending knowledge when it comes to this township and the surrounding area. I already and will continue to miss our daily discussions, more like stories, about everything "West Pottsgrove" – the people, the businesses, the projects. I often kidded with him that I should be taking notes and documenting everything he had to share. For those of you who knew the man, of which there are many, you know that he loved his family, and he loved this community. I can still hear him saying "be good" as he left each day and there is a huge void left behind now that he is gone. Rest in peace, and finally pain free....Tom you are sorely missed.

I want to personally thank the Board of Commissioners, Police Department, Public Works Department, Code Enforcement, Township Administration and Community Members who have made me feel so welcome during my first year. I am looking forward to meeting more of the residents in the days to come. Please do not hesitate to reach out or stop by the Township Building, we are here to assist as best we can. Here's to a Great New Year in 2024. Have a Wonderful and Safe Holiday Season!

Debi Roesener, Township Manager

Pottstown Regional Public Library



500 E. HIGH ST, POTTSTOWN PA 19464
610-970-6551 pottstownregionalpubliclibrary.org

The Pottstown Regional Public Library is proud to be your local community library. We offer programs ranging from early literacy to senior interests, a social gathering space, and community education. We are proud to celebrate over 100 years of service to our community.

The Pottstown Regional Public Library is open from 10 am to 8 pm Monday-Wednesday, 10 am to 6 pm Thursday-Friday, and 9 am to 4 pm on Saturdays. We are closed on Sundays.

We are happy to offer many programs and services for our patrons, including public computers, faxing, printing, and scanning services, as well as passport and notary services (by appointment).

Regular adult programs include: Fiber Arts Circle, Adult Book Clubs, American MahJong, Pottstown Writer's Group, and Afternoon Crafts. We regularly host special events and outside speakers. This fall will feature an autumn-themed Adult Reading Beanstack Challenge from September 1st through October 31st. Mike Snyder will lead a class on the Battle of Gettysburg at the library on Mondays from October 2nd through November 9th. We are also introducing a special Digital Literacy and Computer Skills course this fall through the PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Initiative.

Regular Children's Programs include: Teen Time Book Talk, Trivia and Game Nights, Maker Space Times, DART Dogs, Bilingual Story Time, Mother Goose Baby Lap-Sit, Lego Club, and Friday Story Times. Enjoy a Play & Connect Workshop on Mondays at 10:30am starting Monday, September 11th. Children ages 0 to 5 determine the direction of their playtime to promote early learning and social interactions, and caretakers get the chance to connect with community resource professionals to support them in their role as first teacher! Workshops will take place on Mondays from September 11th to October 9th.



**For more information about the Pottstown Library,
please call us at 610-970-6551, email at pottstownlibrary@mclinc.org,
or visit us at 500 E. High Street, Pottstown, PA, 19464.**

WEST POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

980 GROSSTOWN ROAD, STOWE, PA 19464
Phone: 610-323-2090 Fax: 610-323-9338



National Night Out –

The Township hosted its 1st National Night Out on Tuesday August 1, 2023. The night was intended to 1) promote strong police-community partnerships and neighborhood comraderies to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live and work; 2) Enhance the relationship between the neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community; and 3) Provide an opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances. The night included feature demonstrations, activities for the kids, food & beverages, giveaways, and music. Members of our local Police, Fire, and EMS Departments were on hand to meet with and interact with the community. We look forward to doing it again next summer. Thank you for the support.



Department Promotions: The police department is proud to announce the promotion of two officers to the rank of Corporal, effective October 8, 2023:

Officer Robert Radswillas was promoted to Corporal and assigned as a Patrol Unit Supervisor. Officer Radswillas joined the police department in 2003. Officer Radswillas is a team leader on Montgomery County SWAT- West, and instructs Use of Force, Defensive Tactics and Firearms training for the PD. He is also a veteran of the US Armed Services.



Detective Timothy Roeder was promoted to Corporal and assigned as a Crime Unit Supervisor. Detective Roeder joined the police department in 2003. He was promoted to Detective in 2015 and was a member of the Montgomery County Swat- West Negotiator's Team. Detective Roeder served as the Department Officer in Charge from December 2020 through August 2021.



Body Watch Cameras: The arduous process of standing up a Body Watch Camera program came to fruition in October. All officers of the PD are now deploying with Body Watch Cameras (BWC). BWCs are expected to enhance public confidence, enhance police accountability, and reduce both criminal justice costs and use of force incidents.

Joseph Sokolofski, Chief of Police

From The Tax Collector

The County/Township Real Estate Tax bill is generally mailed out March 1st and the School District Tax bill is mailed out July 1st. **In the coming year, the County/Township Real Estate bill will be mailed out on February 1, 2024.** These are taxes levied by the Township, County and School District. There is a discount period of 60 days, followed by a face period of 60 days. The penalty period is applicable for the remainder of the year. Some owners may have their taxes escrowed in their mortgage. It is the home owner's responsibility to ensure their bank knows the current amount due.

At the same time as the School District Real Estate bills comes out, there is a Per Capita Tax that is mailed out. This is a \$15.00 tax levied against ALL residents of the Township ages 18 or older, regardless of whether they rent or own a home. There are some exemptions for this tax such as being a full-time student, active military, deceased, or no longer residing in the Township.

For your convenience, there is a locked drop box located in the Township building lobby to leave your payments if you are not available to pay in person during collection hours. Collection hours are posted on the Township website and printed on the tax bills. Tax bills can also be mailed to the address below.

Jeff Kazmierczak, PO BOX 3095, Stowe, Pa 19464

Direct any tax related questions to taxcollector@westpottsgrove.org
or by calling the **direct tax line at 484-300-4910.**

Code Enforcement

TRASH TALK - Householders shall place their trash and recyclable containers at the curb or designated place for pickup by J.P. Mascaro and Sons no later than 6:00 a.m. on the days scheduled for collection and no earlier than 6:00 p.m. on the previous day. Containers are not to be placed in the street for pickup. Lastly, your containers should be removed from the curb line no later than 8 p.m., the day of the pickup.

PET POOP ETIQUETTE - Keeping pet waste off the ground is an important responsibility held by all pet owners. When taking your dog for a walk, always keep a couple waste pickup bags with you. Even if you don't expect Fido to go, you never know. It may also be that you bump into a neighbor who has forgotten a bag of his or her own and will appreciate the gesture. According to the West Pottsgrove Twp. Code, animal waste should be collected daily and placed in a container or receptacle on your property that has a tight lid in order to not attract bugs or rodents. Please be courteous as to whose trash can waste is placed in. Your neighbor may not appreciate waste being placed in their trash can as it may attract unwanted pests. Dog waste is more than just a gross and unsightly mess. It also can be considered a major stormwater polluter. Dog waste contains bacteria and is high in nitrogen and phosphorus which negatively affect streams and creeks. Picking up dog waste keeps it from washing into our streams.

DON'T BLOW IT ... INTO THE STREET - Keep clippings in your yard and not in the street. Blowing or leaving grass clippings and other debris such as leaves in the street doesn't just look bad, it is also a Code violation and violators could face possible fines. Grass clippings and leaves can clog the Townships stormwater drainage system causing a backup and potentially flooding during a rain event. In addition, during snow events please do not shovel snow into the street. This may create a dangerous situation for drivers.

RENTAL PROPERTIES (refer to Chapter 7 of the Code of the Township of West Pottsgrove)

Landlords **MUST** obtain an annual registration from the Township Code Department.

Landlords **MUST** give written notice to the Township of all changes in occupancy in said rentals.

Annual registration must list the names and ages of ALL occupants.

Rental Invoices will be sent out in mid-December for the upcoming calendar year.

PROPERTY RESALE - All properties must be inspected for code compliance and sewer lateral inspections prior to the issuance of a Use & Occupancy Permit. Please see the Townships website for an application and a list of requirements.

Joe Chrisman
Code Enforcement Officer



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Parks and Recreation

In 2023 the Township hosted a community event to clean up and “refresh” the Howard Street & Vine Street Parks. In 2022 the Township was awarded several local grants and a private donation to assist with improvements to “Old Timer’s Field”, the field located behind the Township building. The Township has expanded the scope of work for Old Timer’s Field and applied for additional grant funding in 2023. The Township intends to utilize the grant funding to complete the Old Timer’s Field project in early spring of 2024. Improvements will include, field restoration, new fencing, storm drainage, benches, and ADA accessibility. The additional grant funding and donations will be put towards replacing the field lighting with cost effective LED fixtures to bring them up to current Little League requirements, and parking lot improvements.

In 2022, the Township was awarded local grant funding to support the development of a Master Plan for the future Veteran’s Memorial Park (former pool site). A planning committee, including residents and Commissioners, have been diligently working over the summer months to develop and finalize the master plan. The Master Plan should be finalized before the end of 2023, at which time work may begin on putting together the construction plans for the project. The Township is pursuing grant funding to support the construction of the park. The schedule for construction will be dependent on availability of any grant funding to assist with the completion of the project. The Township hopes to place this project under construction by mid-summer 2024 pending approvals and funding.

The Township plans on partnering with local agencies and asking for Township volunteers to participate in cleanup events in the spring and fall to help maintain and improve our parks for the safe use of our residents.

The Township is always open to hearing ideas from our residents for new park or recreation projects, or improvements they would like to see made at our existing park and open space recreation areas. Please do not hesitate to contact us at the contact information listed above.

Remembering Commissioner Thomas A Palladino

(5/22/42 - 9/20/23)

I never knew how one man could touch so many lives until I met a man named Tom Palladino. I met Tom approximately 12 years ago and at that time knew very little about him. However, through the years as our friendship grew, I learned a lot and just how many people he would get to know.

I learned that Tom grew up in Stowe as well as his family. The current Township building once belonged to the Palladinos and was the location for the business. When I rode with Tom around the Township, he would always make me aware of the historical aspect of buildings or different parcels of land. He was like a living history book for Stowe, his knowledge of the community seemed never ending.

He would talk about his time in the military and tell everyone who would listen interesting stories. Some were humorous and others were more serious.

Tom would tell me how he learned all about heating and air conditioning. He learned the trade of installing and repairing both. He became quite good at his job and people knew that not only was he good at installing and fixing air conditioners and heaters, but he was also a good teacher.

Tom became a teacher and in the course of doing so touched many students’ lives. I got to hear stories from many of his students upon their graduation, thanks to Tom’s teachings.

Tom leaves teaching and becomes a judge where he becomes knowledgeable of the law.

Finally, Tom becomes a Township Commissioner again where I have served alongside of him for the last 10 years.

Wherever I went with him someone would always approach us to tell him thank you. They would say that he left a positive impact on them or someone they knew. Whether it was from his days as a teacher, or a judge, he always tried to be fair and, in some cases, give his guidance.

Personally, to me Tom was a friend, my mentor, my teacher, and a person I could go to when I had a question or needed advice on a particular subject. But know this, he has impacted so many people and I will miss him as I am sure so many other people will as well.

-Steve Miller, President
Board of Commissioners

Financial Outlook

Township staff worked diligently to prepare a budget for 2024 that responded to various economic factors while continuing to provide essential public services. For the upcoming year, our anticipated 2024 General Fund Budget expenditures total \$3,264,556.29, which is approximately \$44,000 higher than 2023, representing a 1% increase over 2023. Revenues for the 2024 budget year have been estimated to total \$3,273,209.95. Final budget figures will be discussed and approved at the December BOC meetings.

In addition to our General Fund, we also benefit from receiving funding from the state, various grants, long-term loans, and other sources to assist us with necessary streets projects, sewer repairs and projects, mandatory storm sewer system compliance, and park upgrades.

Where Your Township Tax Dollars Go

Understanding where your tax dollars go is important. As with all municipalities, public safety is an important part of our budget. Currently, our police and fire protection budgets total \$1,477,789.58, which accounts for 45% of the total operating budget for the township. In addition to police and fire protection the township provides the following services in the most cost-effective way possible:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Roadway Maintenance | Street Lighting | Yard Waste Collection |
| Library Services | Police, Fire, and EMS Services | Recycling Collection |
| Code Enforcement | Parks Maintenance | |

For the last four years the township has not increased taxes and worked with a budget based on a tax rate of 3 mills, providing the services listed above, including but not limited to, for residents and businesses within the township for approximately 82 cents per day for a property with an assessed value of \$100,000.

To maintain our current level of services, complete much needed infrastructure projects, and, more importantly to reduce the need to transfer money from our capital reserve account to balance the budget, the Board of Commissioners is recommending an increase in the tax rate from 3-mills to 4.5 mills. This would result in an increase of \$150 per year for a property assessed at \$100,000.

The chart right shows where your tax dollars go. On average, taxpayers contribute 9 cents for every dollar (8.81%) to support township services. The figures in this chart assume that the School District tax rate, currently at 41.96 mills, and the County tax rate, currently at 4.627 mills, will not increase for 2024, and is based on a property with an assessed value of \$100,000.

We recognize that a tax increase is never a welcome announcement. However, this increase represents an investment in our community's well-being and growth. As we move forward, township staff will continue to work hard to provide quality services to residents while remaining fiscally responsible.



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Emergency Management

Please consult our Emergency Management Facebook page (West Pottsgrove Emergency Management Page - West Pottsgrove Emergency Management Page | Facebook) regarding severe weather events.

All Code Blue cold weather declarations and information on warming shelters will be posted on the West Pottsgrove Emergency Management Facebook page as well as Snow Emergency Information.

Along with the notifications, guidance will also be issued based on the pending circumstances. Each weather event requires a level of preparation and awareness by each resident and business owner.

Please heed the warnings issued and do not hesitate to reach out to the Township (610.323.7717) or via email to our Emergency Management team (info@westpottsgrove.org).



Residents are strongly encouraged to sign up at www.Readymontco.org to receive emergency and non-priority township-wide notifications. You can elect to receive time-sensitive messages wherever you specify, such as your home, mobile or business phones, email, text messages and more. Please note that landlines are automatically included in ReadyMontco reverse 911 emergency alerts and therefore they do not require registration through ReadyMontco.

This system allows for customization of special needs that responders may require to be informed about in case of emergency.

Take a moment to register yourself and family members for this important service at <https://member.everbridge.net/453003085612338/login> or on the mobile app Everbridge. If registering on the app, when "organization" or "keyword" pops up, input Montgomery. Then click on the one that specifies Montgomery County, PA. You must complete a few sections which can be customized to the type of notification, special needs to be met, and more. For registration instructions, click here. You can also view an instructional video for assistance with registering.

**Please note that landlines are automatically included in ReadyMontco reverse 911 emergency alerts and therefore they do not require registration through ReadyMontco. However, if your cellphone is already registered it will need to be registered again.*

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IMPORTANT REMINDER

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WINTER 2024



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Thank You!

West Pottsgrove would like to thank the businesses that appear in this newsletter and to recognize them each as supporters and cornerstones of our community. For it is with their contributions that this newsletter has been produced at no charge to our residents. The Township would like to further request that citizens, in response, patronize these businesses first when given a choice as these businesses are saving each citizen tax dollars.

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