

West Pottsgrove Township



WINTER 2022-23

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President's Message

Since our last edition of the newsletter, Township Manager Scott Hutt has resigned. He took a new position with another Township. We wish Scott well in his new position. We have hired a new Township Manager. Welcome aboard Debi Roesener. Debi grew up in the Township and brings with her experience in engineering, grant writing, and has knowledge of her new position which will be beneficial to the Township.

The Township has a new position of codes writer. Please make sure that you maintain your property including the removal of snow from the sidewalk. This will prevent you from receiving a warning or citation if the violation is not corrected.

We are continuing to work on the Township's infrastructure seeking out grants wherever available. We signed a new five-year contract with the Borough for Fire Services and want to thank them for their professionalism and response time. We have also signed a five-year contract with our Police Department avoiding going to arbitration.

We represent the residents. We always want to hear what is important to you. Our meetings are held at the Township Building on the First and Third Wednesday of each month at 7pm.

We are working on a Veteran's Memorial Park located at the former community pool property. If you wish to serve on the committee, please notify the Township.

The cold winter weather is approaching. AAA recommends keeping the following items in your vehicle – flashlight, jumper cables or jump pack, basic tool kit, extra gloves, first aid kit, ice scraper, snowbrush, blanket, and deicer.

Please beware that during winter storm events the roadway may appear to be wet, however, it may be black ice.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, we would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Steve Miller, President
Board of Commissioners



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www.ydasp.com

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.



• Pear Tree Court Apartments

• Upland Village Apartments & Townhomes

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www.CreativeMinds.org

Infant – 6 weeks - 20 months

Toddler – 20 months – age 3

Pre-K (ages 3-5)

Elementary Full day Kindergarten – 3rd Grade

Before/After Care – Pottsgrove School District

Summer Camp – Kindergarten – 5th Grade

Licensing: OCDEL -
PA Dept of Education

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Manager's Report



At the beginning of October, I came on fulltime as the new manager, replacing Scott Hutt. I am thankful to have the opportunity to formally introduce myself via our biannual newsletter. I grew up in the Township and my parents still live here so I have a vested interest in seeing the Township grow and improve. Prior to my start, the Township was successful in executing key five-year contracts for both Police and Fire, which will help to ensure the welfare and safety of our residents. In addition to those two contracts, we recently entered into a three-year contract with JP Mascaro for the Township's trash, recycling, and bulk item collection which began on December 1, 2022. We would like to thank Waste Management for their years of service and look forward to working with JP Mascaro in the coming few years.

Since I have assumed my position, we have been working hard to seek out ways to improve the Township as a whole. The township has secured a \$200,000 CDBG grant from Montgomery County to assist with the sanitary sewer replacement project within Anthony Wayne Drive. Additional PAHWF and Montco 2040 grants have been awarded to supplement Township funding to make major improvements to Old Timer's Field located behind the Township Building, which is utilized by many of our local baseball teams. The future Veteran's Memorial Park also received grant funding to assist with implementing a Master Plan for the project in the coming year.

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.

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.

I 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.

As winter approaches, I encourage all residents to be mindful of snow removal on their property and parking restrictions along snow emergency routes (Berks, Vine, and Center). We understand that plows can push snow back onto your property, unfortunately, it is just the nature of the beast. I ask you to be patient and to not shovel snow back onto the streets. The Township will advertise snow emergencies on its social media page (www.facebook.com/WestPottsgroveTownship), website (www.westpottsgrove.org), Emergency Management page (West Pottsgrove Emergency Management Page | Facebook), and Township sign. Our police department will also be pitching in, advising residents whose cars are on the street at that time. We appreciate your anticipated cooperation with these matters.

I encourage all residents to attend monthly BOC meetings which are held on the First and Third Wednesday of each month 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. 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.

I want to personally thank to the Board of Commissioners, Police Department, Public Works Department, Township Administration and Community Members who have made me feel so welcome during my first few months. 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 2023. Have a Wonderful and Safe Holiday Season!

Debi Roesener, *Township Manager*

CODE ENFORCEMENT –

Keeping the Township a Beautiful Place to Live

Code Enforcement plays an important role in preserving the attractive appearance of neighborhoods in the Township. The mission of Code Enforcement is to provide fair comprehensive enforcement of the Township Ordinance, which includes junk, debris, trash, nuisance, snow removal, weeds, zoning, and rental/leased property maintenance.

Residents are encouraged to cooperate with one another in a friendly manner to resolve minor concerns before contacting Code Enforcement for assistance. Working together we can provide and maintain safe, clean, and attractive neighborhoods.

Below are some common resident concerns and the rules and regulations regarding them.

Winter Season

As winter approaches snow is not far behind. Residents are reminded to shovel the snow off all sidewalks as soon as possible to avoid possible fines or pedestrian injuries. In addition, if there is a fire hydrant on your property be sure to clear a 3 ft. radius around the hydrant and a clear path to the street. When removing snow off your sidewalk, driveway, or vehicle do not throw snow into the street. This makes it difficult for passing plows and may lead to possible re-freezing. As always remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance – the elderly and those with disabilities. Working together property owners and the Township can get life back to normal as soon as possible after a snow event.



High Grass & Weeds

All premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds or plant growth in excess of 6 inches. This includes, but is not limited to, sidewalk, curbing, and maintaining any plants, flowers, or trees along sidewalk edges so they do not hang low or impede pedestrian travel. This area of maintenance is the responsibility of the property owners. Don't forget this also includes keeping the roadway gutter line along curbs free of vegetation.



Vehicles/Boats/Trailers

Any partially dismantled, wrecked, junked, discarded, disabled, inoperative or unlicensed motor vehicle which is parked, kept or stored on any exterior property for more than seven days, including but not limited to: (vehicles that lack an engine), (missing one or more tires or other essential parts) or (vehicles that have become a haven for vermin), (are maintained in a precarious or dangerous location), (have broken glass or other sharp edges) or otherwise present a threat to the health, safety or welfare of the public should be removed by the property owner. Vehicles must have current registration or registration stickers displayed.

Trash, Debris, & Junk

Yards, vacant areas in the rears of stores, vacant lots, houses, buildings, accessory structures and premises should be cleared of trash and debris. Any unsightly accumulation of junk, garbage, broken glass, scrap automobile parts, mattresses, broken stone, concrete, crates, barrels, boxes, scrap metals, scrap lumber, used tires, discarded building material, appliances, fixtures, or other dismantled machinery on public or private property should be disposed of properly.

Rental Properties

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

This list contains only general information.

For Specific Code Information - Please contact the Township Code Department for any additional information.

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. 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.

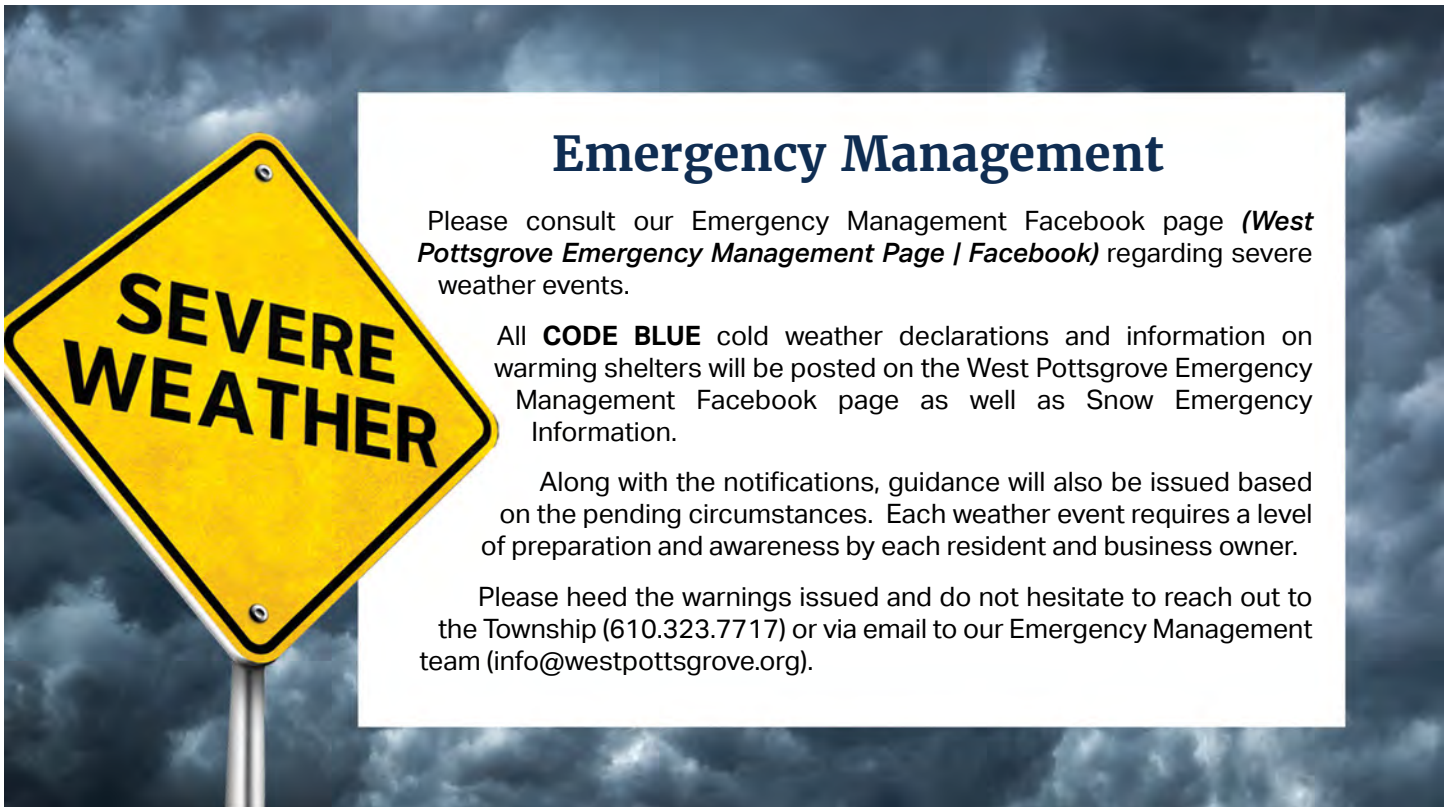
Some owners may have their taxes escrowed in their mortgage. It is the home owner's responsibility to ensure their bank knows the current amount due.

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.

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

Jeff Kazmierczak
PO BOX 3095
Stowe, Pa 19464



Emergency Management

Please consult our Emergency Management Facebook 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).



Wood & Pellet Stove Safety

As the temperature drops outside, wood and pellet stoves may be fired up inside the home. What you may not realize is that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires during the winter months.

- » Have a QUALIFIED professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys.
- » Stoves should be listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- » In wood stoves, burn only DRY, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- » Have your chimney and stove INSPECTED and cleaned by a certified chimney sweep every fall just before heating season.
- » CLEAN the inside of your stove periodically using a wire brush.
- » Allow ashes to COOL before disposing of them. Place ashes in a covered metal container. Keep the container at least 10 feet away from the home and other buildings.
- » Keep a CLOSE EYE on children whenever a wood or pellet stove is being used. Remind them to stay at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- » Stoves need SPACE. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- » INSTALL and maintain **carbon monoxide alarms** (CO) outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection, interconnect the CO alarms. When one sounds, they all sound.

SMOKE ALARM SENSE

Install and maintain smoke alarms on **EVERY** level of your home, outside each separate sleeping area and inside each bedroom. For the best protection, interconnect the alarms.

When one sounds, they all sound. **TEST** all smoke alarms at least monthly.



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NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

CARBON MONOXIDE
ALARM

Financial Outlook

Our 2023 Township General Fund Budget totals \$3,511,021. This year comes in \$669,536 higher than 2022. Although this is an increase compared to the 2022 budget, considering the current state of the economy and inflation reaching its highest rate in 40 years, this increase is expected with the cost of essentially everything rising. A specific item of interest is the curbside recycling contract costs which accounts for approximately 48% of the increase and therefore results in a larger transfer from Capital Reserves to balance our budget.

TRANSFER FROM CAPITAL RESERVES:

- 2022 = \$373,837.66
- 2023 = \$600,000

We do benefit from receiving liquid fuels funding from the state, this year we are carrying over \$400,000 into our general fund to ease the burden on proceeding with necessary road projects. We reap benefits from the aforementioned state funds and having reserves; it allows us to do more with less than desirable revenue streams. As we put the pandemic behind us, we continue to benefit from receiving government funds (American Rescue Plan Act Funds), and in late 2022 we received \$201,560. Our plan to utilize those funds remains steadfast towards storm sewer repairs, additional sewer projects and MS4 compliance, which is heavily regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

However, understanding where our money is allocated is key in understanding service delivery. With most municipalities, police are a major part of the budgeting process. Currently, our police budget totals \$1,321,867.15. While we recognize that public safety is one the Township’s essential responsibilities, we also recognize that we must deliver all our services in the most cost effective way possible. Police services (38% of the operating budget) must be reviewed in the context of other critical needs of the township, including maintaining our roads and vital mandated environmental priorities.

2023 Expenses



Our goal is to balance the budget without using our “savings” or Capital Reserve funds. We are working tirelessly to provide quality services to residents while remaining fiscally responsible. We seek out grants, long-term loans and utilize state funds to offset the burden onto the taxpayer. This year’s budget results in no increase in taxes.

WEST POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT



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

BODY WORN CAMERAS

The West Pottsgrove Township Police Department (WPGPD) is proud to announce that they are receiving funding through a matching grant awarded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to support the development and implementation of a body worn camera program. The grant will assist with providing each full-time officer a camera and with sustaining the program for five years. The Chief anticipates deploying the cameras by the Spring of 2023.

FRAUD/SCAMS

The WPGPD continues to investigate fraudulent activity by the way of phone scams, and they will likely be exacerbated by scams relative to the 2022 Midterm elections. Scams come in many forms, but they tend to make similar promises and threats, or ask you to pay in unconventional ways. Scammers might pretend to be law enforcement or a federal agency. They might say you'll be arrested, fined, or deported if you don't pay taxes or some other debt right away. They may claim to be from a public utility and threaten that your service will be interrupted until you pay. They may attempt to pressure you to donate to political campaigns over the phone. The goal is to scare you into paying, but legitimate agencies will never call and threaten you. There's never a good reason to send cash or pay with a gift card- Scammers will often ask you to pay in a way that makes it hard for you to get your money back — by wiring money, putting money on a gift card, prepaid card or cash reload card, or using a money transfer app. Anyone who asks you to pay that way is a scammer. If you receive a suspicious call, prior taking any action, hang up and call a close friend or a family member for advice or, better yet- call the police!

Joseph Sokolofski
Chief of Police

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I pay a traffic citation?

You should pay a traffic citation within (10) days in person or by mailing to:

DISTRICT COURT 38-1-11

1 Security Plaza, Suite 101, Pottstown, PA 19464

Do you do vacation checks if I'm away from home?

Yes, just come to the station and fill out a vacation form. This form contains information such as where you're going, how long you'll be gone, and contact information for you and a responder should there be a problem.

How do I get a copy of a police report?

You can contact the Police Department at (610) 323-2090 or come in person and verify that the report is able to be released. You will then be given other information on what is needed to obtain the report.

How do I get a Protection from Abuse Order (P.F.A.)?

You go to the Prothonotary's Office at the Montgomery County Courthouse. They will provide you with the necessary information. The Prothonotary's Office can be reached at (610) 278-3360, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. till 4:15 p.m. If it's after hours a West Pottsgrove Police Officer can assist you with obtaining an emergency P.F.A. if the proper criteria are met.

Is there a curfew in West Pottsgrove Township?

Yes, under section 13-19 of the West Pottsgrove Township Ordinances it states:

It shall be unlawful for any person 16 years of age and under to be, or remain in, or upon any of the streets, highways, alleys, parks, or other public places in the Township at any time between the hours of 9:30 pm and 5:00 am during the period from September 30, to March 1, inclusive, and from 10:00 pm to 5:00 am during all remaining months, unless accompanied by a parent, guardian or other person having legal custody of such minor.

information from <https://westpottsgrove.org/services/police-department/>

Parks and Recreation

In 2021 the Township completed upgrades to the parks at Howard Street & Vine Street. 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 intends to utilize the grant funding to complete the Old Timer's Field project in early spring of 2023. Improvements will include, field restoration, new fencing, storm drainage, benches, and ADA accessibility. We will also be pursuing additional grant funding and donations to replace the field lighting with cost effective LED fixtures and to bring them up to current Little League requirements.

As mentioned in the Spring newsletter, the Township intends to create a Veterans Memorial Park at the former site of the community pool. In 2022, the Township was awarded local grant funding to support the development of a Master Plan for this future park and is looking for Township volunteers to assemble a study committee in 2023 which will assist in determining what features will best suit this facility. If any resident is interested in serving on this committee, please contact the Township Manager, Debi Roesener at 610.323.7717 or via email at droesener@westpottsgrove.org

Adventure Grove has installed an all-inclusive playground behind the West Pottsgrove Elementary school, which is a welcome addition to the existing Howard Street and Vine Street playgrounds located in the Township and provides a place for active recreation for all residents.

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.



Township Park & Pavilion



Howard Street Park



Vine Street Park



Ralph F. Murgia Park

ICE & SNOW, TAKE IT SLOW

Each year in the U.S., there are over **1,000 deaths** and **100,000 injuries** due to vehicle crashes during winter weather.

DID YOU
KNOW?



Clean off your vehicle before driving.
Flying snow from cars causes accidents.



Keep it slow, and don't use cruise control.
Roads can be slick even if they just look wet.



Leave extra distance between vehicles.
Stay especially far from snow plows.

weather.gov



SHOVEL SMART!



Shoveling heavy, wet snow can cause back injuries and heart attacks. Don't push yourself!



Dress warmly, making sure to cover your head, fingers and toes.



Stay hydrated, but avoid heavy meals right before or after shoveling.



Move only small amounts of snow with each pass of the shovel.



Take frequent breaks.
Stop shoveling entirely if you feel exhausted!

weather.gov



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