

BLENDON TOWNSHIP SPRING NEWSLETTER 2022

FROM THE DESK OF CATHY SHINABERRY, TRUSTEE

As your newest Blendon Township Trustee, I want to introduce myself. I have a Bachelor's Degree from Otterbein and a Master's Degree from BGSU. I retired from teaching music after 30+ years and became a Realtor®, though I still teach a few distance ed courses for a local college. I have been married for 43 years, have 4 grown children and 5 grandchildren.

I have lived in Blendon Township for 39 years and have much pride in our community. I am excited to be on the Blendon Township Board of Trustees and will use my education, enthusiasm, integrity, honesty, work ethic, and experience to work with Jan Heichel and Jim Welch to maintain and improve the township. I am also excited about renovating the building that was purchased just before I took office that will house our Senior Center, Police Department, and Administration Department in the future.

One of my goals is communication with all residents and businesses. We are posting information on the website at www.blendontwp.org, on social media (Huber Ridge, Sunbury Woods, and Minerva Park Facebook groups), and our newsletter. We welcome attendance at trustee meetings; dates are on the website.

Please feel free to reach out to us at any time; we are here for you, the residents! We need you to let us know when there are things to celebrate about the township, as well as needs/wants/suggestions. As a new trustee, I bring a fresh eye, but we also value YOUR input. If there are things we don't know about, we can't celebrate or fix them. I was proud to read on Facebook so many thanks to our road crew for their excellent plowing after the big ice/snowstorm in February. I look forward to serving you.

FROM THE DESK OF SHAWN SMITH, FISCAL OFFICER

OHIO CHECKBOOK, Putting government transparency at your fingertips. The Ohio Checkbook serves as the singular and most trusted resource for Ohioans to obtain both local and state financial information. The Ohio Checkbook is a result of a joint initiative from two first-of-their-kind sites, Ohiocheckbook.com and Ohio's Interactive Budget. The collective effort enhances government transparency by providing real-time state financial and transactional data. Users can view online government spending, as well as how revenue is allocated.



FROM THE DESK OF JAN HEICHEL, TRUSTEE

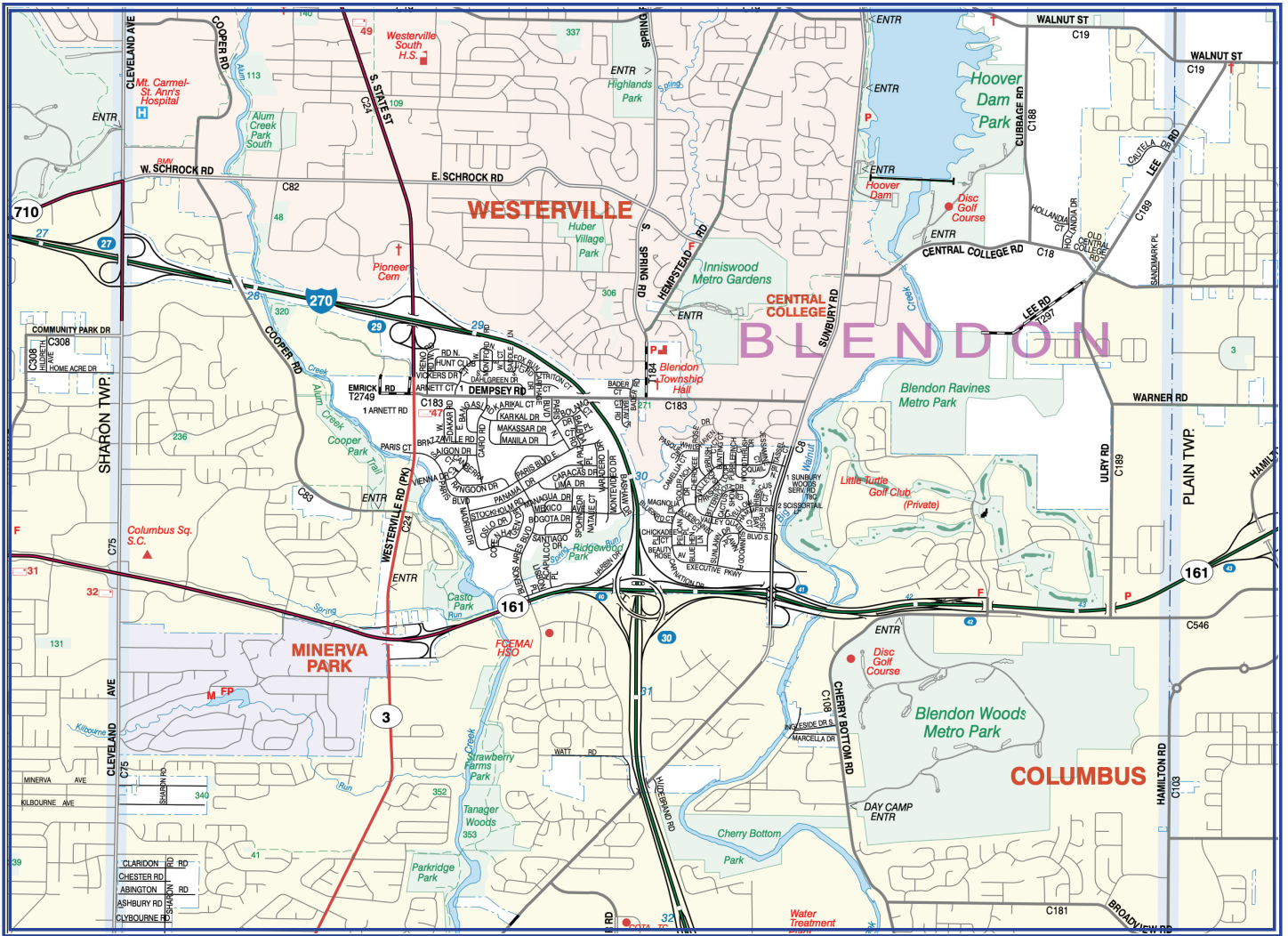
The Pilgrim Fathers brought the township form of government to America in 1620. This unit of local government eventually spread as far west as the Rocky Mountains. To keep pace with the demands of changing times, the functions, duties, and obligations of the township have changed over the years. Three trustees and a fiscal officer, each elected to a four-year term, administer our townships today. Township officials are neighborhood officials and, hence, are more directly responsible to the voters than any other officials.

Ohio townships provide a variety of essential services to residents. Our services include road maintenance, fire, EMS, police, parks, recreation, cemeteries, senior services, and zoning.

Blendon is one of seventeen townships in Franklin County, and we are bordered by Westerville, Genoa Township, Minerva Park, and Columbus. Blendon consists of several communities such as Sunbury Woods, Huber Ridge, Fox Chase, Hunt Club, Gould Park, Glengary Heights, Cleveland Heights and Glengary Woods. For a scenic route, take Central College Road east by Hoover Dam. Our population is 9,193 and consists of 6.3 square miles. All of the white areas on the map (shown on the next page) are Blendon Township. Our map can also be found on our website with zoom capabilities.

WHAT IS NEW IN BLENDON TOWNSHIP?

- Sheetz, Inc. is an American chain of convenience stores and coffee shops. The stores sell gasoline, custom food, beverages, and convenience store items, with all locations offering 24/7 service. Sheetz is planning to build on the corner of Dempsey and Westerville Roads.
- Jet's Pizza is an American pizza franchise restaurant. They have opened a shop in the Sunbury Woods Plaza next to Jersey Mike's.
- Arby's, currently in the Sunbury Woods Shopping Plaza, is hoping to relocate to an empty building that was previously a bank on the North side of the plaza.
- Christ Church Anglican joined Blendon Township with a newly built church, located at 6118 Westerville Road.
- The Trustees purchased 4079 Executive Parkway to eventually become our new Police Station, Senior Center, and Administrative Offices. (More information on this later in this newsletter)



PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST FOR THE 2023 CALENDAR

Last fall, we mailed all residents the 2022 Blendon Calendar. All the gorgeous photographs were taken within Blendon by our residents and staff. We want to thank everyone who submitted pictures for this calendar. We invite you to help create our 2023 calendar. Send us your best photos of the places and events we are proud of in Blendon Township (businesses, beautiful scenes/township parks, car show, etc.). Make sure the places are in Blendon Township boundaries (Ex: Inniswood is not). If your photograph(s) are selected for our calendar, you could win prizes and be part of Blendon’s Heritage Art Show. We will also feature some images on our website. Submit your photos (limit 8 entries) anytime during the year (through October 1st) with your name and address via email to Jheichel@blendontwp.org.

BLENDON’S TEXT ALERT SERVICE

Would you like to be kept up to date with urgent Blendon Township news? Our Text Alert Service sends pressing text notifications to our residents. To sign up for our **FREE TEXT ALERTS**, text **zbc64674** to 313131. Your registration information will never be sold or shared.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Our popular community garden is back for its eleventh year. It is conveniently located behind the Blendon Township Complex on Hempstead Road. The rented garden plots include community garden tools and water. You can register at the Administration Office at 6350 Hempstead Road during our regular office hours – Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or by calling our office at (614) 882-1270. Join your neighbors to grow some fresh food and have some fun!



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

The Trustees are proud to present the following events. Watch your next newsletter or visit www.blendontwp.org for new events as they are added. Note: All dates are subject to change due to Covid-19.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS

6330 Hempstead Road, 6:30 p.m.
(Wednesday's unless otherwise noted)
March 30th
April 13th & 27th
May 11th & 25th
June 8th & 22nd

COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP DAYS

Blendon Complex, 6330 Hempstead Road
Free Dumpster use, Tire Disposal, & Electronics Drop Off
Friday, April 22nd, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 23rd, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 24th, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Please visit www.blendontwp.org for acceptable and unacceptable materials/items.

FREE DOCUMENT SHREDDING

Blendon Complex, 6330 Hempstead Road
Saturday, April 23rd, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

DEA NATIONAL RX TAKE-BACK DAY

***date has been moved

Blendon Complex, 6330 Hempstead Road
New Date: Saturday, April 30th, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

BLENDON'S EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, April 9th 10:00 a.m.
Blendon Senior Center, 6330 Hempstead Road
(614)882-1260

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

Blendon Central Cemetery, 6330 Hempstead Rd.
Monday, May 30th 11:00 a.m.
Free Old-fashioned picnic in the Blendon Senior Center or a drive-through take-out picnic, if necessary due to Covid protocols, following the ceremony.

WESTERVILLE AREA HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

Westerville Public Service Dept, 350 Park Meadow Rd.
Enter from Schrock Road. Visit www.westerville.org or swaco.org
Saturday, September 22, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION

On Memorial Day, we remember those who gave their lives to protect and preserve freedom for our country. Due to the Covid pandemic, our traditional Memorial Day Ceremony was changed to a virtual format for the past two years. We are pleased to announce that this year our outdoor Remembrance Service at the Blendon Central Cemetery is back. It is our great privilege to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Please join us on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30th, at 11:00 a.m., near the flagpole in the Blendon Central Cemetery. Free old-fashioned picnic in our Senior Center following the ceremony (drive-through take-out picnic if Covid protocols change).



BLENDON BLOOMS

We all desire a beautiful township; we enjoy seeing the beauty and know that a stunning landscape improves property values. Blendon Blooms is a contest to reward those who give special attention to the attractiveness of their property. All residents may participate (no entry fee)! All you need to do is submit up to 5 pictures of your yard that demonstrate your effort to beautify the township (may be spring or summer). A neighbor may nominate a property too.

The categories will be "Best Flowering Landscape," "Best Non-Flowering Landscape," "Best Container Garden," "Best Vegetable Garden," "Best Perennial Garden," and "Best Overall Landscape." Prizes will be awarded in each category. A form will be available on the township website, blendontwp.org beginning April 30, 2022, and forms and photos will be due by August 31. If you don't have a computer for the online entry process and want to enter, contact our Administrative Assistant at (614)882-1270 for a form to be mailed to you, which you may submit with printed photos.



MESSAGES FROM POLICE CHIEF, JOHN BELFORD

Blendon Township Police Department awarded a state grant for Body Worn Cameras.

Our police department has been awarded a state grant of \$19,224.00 to help offset the cost of our recent purchase of Body Worn Cameras (BWC). Because our agency had already purchased BWCs, the grant is to assist the Township in paying for the cloud storage, retrieval and redaction of the video evidence produced by the BWCs.

According to Governor Mike DeWine, 4.7 million dollars in funding will be provided to 109 police agencies in Ohio. The Franklin County Sheriff's Office will receive \$232,000.00 in funding. Other local departments receiving funds from this grant include Upper Arlington, Obetz, Hilliard, Whitehall, and Grove City. Because we pay an annual subscription fee for our BWC cloud storage, BTPD will continue to apply for additional grants each time they are offered.

Citizen App

Citizen is a mobile app that sends users location-based safety alerts, across multiple jurisdictions, in real time. It allows users to read updates about ongoing reports, post and watch live video, listen to dispatcher broadcasts, and leave comments. It alerts you when the police helicopter is operating near your location and has a crime map. It sends you "real-time" police and fire dept. activity near you as it happens. Right now, the app is very active with car thefts, thefts, vehicle crashes, shootings, assaults, etc. It is a good way to see the multi-jurisdiction crime activity. If you only follow BTPD, then you don't see the Columbus and Westerville crime that is sometimes happening only a few streets away. Like almost every other app, there is a free version and a premium version. I use the free version. Check it out if you want to take your crime, traffic, and fire department awareness to the next level.

Current Crime Trends

Central Ohio is currently experiencing an explosion in the number of thefts of vehicles and catalytic converters. Extra caution for owners of newer Hyundai and Kia vehicles. A YouTube video showing thieves how to hotwire these two makes of vehicles has resulted in a massive increase in the thefts of these vehicles. Owners of newer Hyundai and Kia vehicles are advised to use a "club-type" steering wheel lock as extra protection when the vehicle is left unattended in outdoor locations. An electronic device known as a key FOB programmer is gaining popularity with thieves and can be used to steal any key FOB ignition vehicle. Again, a "club-type" steering wheel lock provides extra protection. Thieves targeting catalytic converters can remove them from under a vehicle in less than one minute. The Toyota Prius is the most sought after target due to the higher mineral content in that model but all vehicles with catalytic converters are being targeted. Please be on the lookout and call our radio dispatcher **IMMEDIATELY** at 614.889.9494 if you see any suspicious activity.

FROM THE DESK OF CHAREL BOWMAN, SENIOR DIRECTOR

Blendon Senior Center is again open with all our activities after the Covid restrictions. We are so glad to be welcoming back all the members with the activities they enjoy. Day trips, mystery lunches, Red Hat excursions, men's breakfast, cards and games, chair volleyball and lunches are back on the schedule! Due to Covid we had to curtail classes when people couldn't social distance.

If you have ever wondered what our senior center is like, stop in to meet us, get a newsletter, and take a tour of our center. Or you can go to www.blendontwp.org, look for the government tab, scroll down to senior services. There you will find newsletters and a membership form. Our membership is for ages 55 & older.

We try to make sure our program reflects our members' interest and needs so they can make a physical and emotional connection to feel part of this senior center community.

A MESSAGE FROM FIRE CHIEF, BRIAN MILLER

Please take extra care to dispose of household hazardous waste items properly. Household chemicals include substances such as bleach, ammonia, and paint thinner. Recently, a resident placed hazardous chemicals in a regular trash bag and put it in their Rumpke trash can. **The truck's compacting process caused a leak of the toxic chemicals which resulted in a fire.**

Hazardous wastes are products that have the potential to harm humans or the environment. There are many options to help us dispose of household hazardous wastes safely. Please help us protect our Firefighters, Rumpke employees, and the public from fire by disposing of these materials safely. If all the liquid has been used, the container can be rinsed and thrown away in the trash.

SWACO provides Household Hazardous Waste disposal services for all Franklin County residents. Most items are free to dispose of except latex and water-based paints, which will incur a small fee for disposal. Identifying HHW is easy. Look for key words on the container such as poison, danger, caution, flammable, corrosive, or "use in a well-ventilated area". Residents can take accepted waste items for recycling and/or environmentally safe disposal. Visit www.swaco.org to view their list of acceptable items, their permanent drop-off location, and hours of operation.





FROM THE DESK OF BRYAN RHOADS, ADMINISTRATOR

Over the past two years the Board of Trustees and Administrator have been researching the best move forward to provide adequate facilities for township employees. The police department for Blendon Township has been operating out of the old fire station on Hempstead Road for many years. Prior to the current building, they operated out of the small administration building. The current Police Department lacks adequate changing rooms, locker rooms, and rooms for training. Another problem came to light as well, recruitment. Due to the economy and recent times it's becoming extremely difficult to find new applicants. This has resulted in other agencies increasing wages, building new facilities, and offering amenities that the township cannot match. With that being said, we decided we should at least offer a working environment conducive to success. As we started to design a new building, we determined it would be in the best interest of the staff to build a multi-purpose building to house almost all the township employees. This move would reduce our carbon footprint and allow us to modernize our workforce. As time went by the numbers started rolling in and we soon realized the cost of the project wouldn't work. We paused for a while to look at other possibilities and then we found it. 4079 Executive Parkway. This large 3 story building has been vacant for several years due to COVID-19. We immediately reached out to the owners of the property who agreed to sell the building to the township. This building has enough space to accommodate our current staff and future growth. But more importantly, it's located in an amazing location that will allow us to connect with our neighborhoods and host events. We are eager to expand the new building to accommodate community center events and much more! Stay tuned as we move into the renovation phase over the next few months. We will be sure to keep you all updated.

FROM THE DESK OF JOHN GIAMARCO, SERVICE DIRECTOR

Easy ways to help keep our waterways healthy:

- Please secure trash so it doesn't blow into and pollute a nearby waterway. Lawn and yard waste clippings should also be kept from gutters and storm drains to protect the oxygen levels for aquatic life.
- Minimize the use of toxic fertilizers and pesticides in your garden and try to keep it contained to the garden by not overwatering.
- Oil leaks on concrete or asphalt areas should be soaked up with kitty litter or other absorbent material and then disposed of properly.
- To clear concrete or asphalt areas of debris, including concrete mixers, sweep and put in trash instead of hose off.
- Dispose of animal waste by flushing down the toilet or throwing in the trash.
- Wash cars on gravel or grass and use minimal soap. Dispose of soapy water in sink or toilet. *Commercial car washes recycle the water and clean the runoff.
- Recycle/take used oil, antifreeze, oil filters and other household toxic waste, including paint solvent, to a household hazardous waste collection facility/drive: visit www.swaco.org.
- Store yard, household, and automotive chemicals in a leak-free, cool, dry place.
- Rinse any latex paint-contaminated brushes and rollers in the sink where it will go to a treatment plant, not outdoors.
- Avoid cleaning barbecue grills on paved areas that will need a water rinse; the burnt food is poisonous to animals in the creek.

AQUA PROPOSED RATE INCREASE SUMMARY

- June 2021-Aqua submitted two rate change requests (one for water & one for wastewater).
- August 2021-The PUCO hired an independent auditor to examine the two company filings.
- February 11-PUCO staff, in conjunction with the independent auditor, filed reports on their investigations. These reports are being mailed to the municipal corporations affected by the request. We expect Blendon Township to get one.
- March 14-This is the deadline for Aqua to contest points in the staff report. This is also the deadline for interested parties to intervene and to file direct testimony.
- March 29, 30, and 31-The PUCO will hold an in-person public hearing for customers in the Columbus area to comment on the case. At this time, it is scheduled to be held at the Ohio History Connection at 6:00 pm. On February 22, the Commission ordered Aqua to place ads in the Dispatch announcing the hearings.
- Customers that want to file comments about the rate cases can do so showing up at the public hearing and speak during the open floor portion. If you want your complaint to be in their case docket, please by call (614)466-4095 or email docketing@puco.ohio.gov. You need to cite the case number to have your remarks included in the case docket. The number for the water rate case is: 21-595-WW-AIR. The number for the wastewater case is: 21-596-ST-AIR.
- After the hearing, further negotiations between the company and other involved parties will take place. Then the PUCO will review all the testimony and issue a decision of the amount of the rate change (if any) and an effective date. Our expectations would be that the decision would come down from the PUCO sometime in May.

Keep in mind, the forecasted timeline is subject to change. The items we expect would be most flexible are the public hearings being in person and the decisions. If COVID flairs up again, hearings could go virtual, and our prediction about a decision in May is a personal best guess. The PUCO makes decisions on their own timeline.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Jan Heichel, Chair
Jheichel@blendontwp.org
(614) 214-6786

Cathy Shinaberry, Vice Chair
CShinaberry@blendontwp.org
(614) 561-6579

Jim Welch, Trustee
Jim.Welch@blendontwp.org
(614) 306-8080

Fiscal Officer:

Shawn Smith
SSmith@blendontwp.org
(614) 882-1270

Administrator:

Bryan Rhoads
Bryan.Rhoads@blendontwp.org
(614) 839-2013

Township Offices:

(614) 882-1270
(614) 882-2215 (cemetery office)

Police Department:

John Belford, Police Chief
JBelford@blendontwp.org
Emergency 911
Dispatcher (614) 889-9494
Office (614) 882-8500

Fire Department:

Brian Miller, Fire Chief
Brian.Miller@westerville.org
Emergency 911
Office (614) 901-6600

Road/Service Department:

John Giamarco, Service Director
JGiamarco@blendontwp.org

Senior Center:

Charel Bowman, Director
Cbowman@blendontwp.org
(614) 882-1260

Blendon Twp. Code Enforcement:

Branch Wayt, Property Maintenance Inspector
bwayt@blendontwp.org

Other Important Phone Numbers:

Columbia Gas Company

(800) 344-4077 customer service/emergency
(including gas odor emergency)

Rumpke Waste Removal

(800) 828-8171

Email service concerns to:

Refuse@blendontwp.org

Other Important Phone Numbers:

American Electric Power

(800) 277-2177

Aqua Ohio Water Company

(877) 987-2782 or (614) 882-6586

Blendon Township Zoning

(614) 839-2013

Franklin County Building Permits

(614) 525-3166

SWACO

Permanent Household Hazardous Waste
Center: 645 E. 8th Avenue Columbus, OH
(614) 871-5100 www.swaco.org

Franklin County Public Health:

For public health inquiries (614) 525-3160
For reporting failing Sewage Systems polluting
the ground surface or draining into waterways,
(614)525-4787 or <http://myfcph.org/npdes>

Report Emergency Spills:

Ohio EPA 24-Hour Hot line (800) 282- 9378
Report any other water pollution to Franklin Soil
& Water Conservation District
(614) 486-9613

Environmental Crimes Task Force of Central OH

(614) 871-5322 or www.itsacrime.org for report-
ing illegal dumping of paint, oil, or other solid
waste into a stream, storm drain or any other
body of water.



Trustee Jan Heichel



Trustee Cathy Shinaberry



Trustee Jim Welch



Fiscal Officer Shawn Smith