



# THE BREMEN BEACON

SHINING A LIGHT ON BREMEN TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT & SERVICES



## Message from Maggie

Welcome to the latest edition of the Bremen Beacon. The first half of 2020 have presented unique and difficult challenges for all of us. Let us all share in the belief that the second half of the year offers promise of better times and emerging stronger from the experiences that have affected all of us. This edition will highlight and bring into focus as to why we have hope for a better future.

As many of you already know, township government is the oldest form of government in the United States and formed on the premise of "Neighbor Helping Neighbor", and to that end the following pages will demonstrate how working together benefits all of us and share with you examples of good neighbors and unsung heroes of our communities. Although we have faced some of the most difficult times that any of us can remember, so many of you have answered the call and helped provide relief and comfort to those in need.

This edition is also designed to inform our residents of the variety and array of services that the township offers to the residents of the thirteen communities that are within our boundaries, and to update and present new services that are available to you. We also included the most recent financial summary from our latest audit. In addition, we welcome you to participate in giving us your input by contacting us with any other services that you would like to see the township implement. You may contact us at our administrative office by phone at 708.333.9530 or by email at [info@brementownship.net](mailto:info@brementownship.net). We look forward to hearing from you.

In closing, I wish all of you a happy and healthy remainder of the year. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. Stay safe.

Sincerely,

*Maggie Crotty*

Your neighbor  
Bremen Township Supervisor  
Maggie Crotty



“ Although we have faced some of the most difficult times that any of us can remember, so many of you have answered the call and helped provide relief and comfort to those in need. ”

# Bremen Officials Say Thanks



**FRONT ROW** Highway Commissioner, John Flaherty | Clerk, John Lord | Supervisor, Maggie Crotty | Assessor, Willie Jones  
**BACK ROW Trustees** | Kathryn Straniero | John M. (Mike) Tatro | Keith Gomillia | Mary Catuara

The first half of 2020 has been unique to all of the residents of Bremen Township along with the rest of the nation. These unprecedented times have been challenging to each and every household throughout the township, as well,

That being said, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the many who have stepped up and helped ease the burden that so many of us have faced. It goes without saying that the medical professionals and health care workers were on the front lines providing care and comfort to those in need. The first responders such as Police, Fire and Public Works Departments throughout the township need to be recognized and shown our appreciation for their dedication to their duty and putting themselves in jeopardy in order to preserve some sense of normalcy during these trying times. We salute each and every one of you.

Let us not forget the many other essential workers who stepped up, put themselves at risk, and continued with their responsibilities to serve the public. Where would we be without the grocery store workers, the mail carriers, the gas station attendants, along with so many others who were on the front lines on a daily basis? Our hats are off to all of you. We must also remember the unprecedented challenges that our teachers and school administrations were faced with, who had to adapt to unique methods of teaching to ensure that their students had access to studies to continue their education. Great job all of you!

One of the highlights of this pandemic was the outpouring and overwhelming support from volunteers that came forth to help others in need. Your unselfish dedication to helping keep your communities fed and functioning

most certainly deserves a round of applause. We couldn't have done it without you.

We would be remiss if we didn't give a shout out to all the members of our own staff for staying the course and never neglecting their responsibilities. Each and every Bremen Township department continued to conduct business on an ongoing basis. Whether it was serving senior meals in a drive through, maintaining roads, helping residents navigate property tax issues, or providing assistance to residents in need, they held down the fort and continued operating. We thank all of you,

Last but not least, please remember that we are all facing an uncertain future, but by staying together we will all get through this. Let us keep supporting each other and our communities and remain positive. *Stay safe and strong.*



# Commissioners Corner



*John Flaherty*

For the past three years, our area has experienced record rainfalls during the month of May, with the last one breaking the record for accumulated rain since 1870. That being said, preventing our roads and roadways from flooding has been challenging at best. Although, some of our lowest lying areas were hit the hardest, for the most part, once the rain stopped all our roads and ditches were free of standing water. This is due in part to all the improvements we have made with drainage issues that we have addressed over the past few years.

The snow season, even though we didn't have record setting snowfall, we experienced many smaller totals and timing where it required the crew to repeat the routes to ensure that our roads were ice free and used over 100 tons of salt to accomplish that.

During the COVID 19 shutdown time our crews took precautions and continued with the maintenance that roads and roadways required. In addition, we formulated our resurfacing plans for this season with our engineers and distributed the specifications out to bid. So far this has resulted in a joint effort with the township administration in the resurfacing of the Kedzie Avenue facility. We are currently in the bid letting process for a number of roads to be resurfaced this season.

As always, please do not hesitate to call our office for any assistance that you may need at 708.333.9524. *Thanks, have a great summer, and stay safe.*

# Assessor's Office

Assessor Jones wants to remind all residents that the Appeals Process for Bremen Township will begin on August 6th and will end on September 10. Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic situation, the Assessor's Office strongly recommends that residents contact the office to schedule an appointment with the staff to ensure that you get the assistance you may need for filing an appeal.

During the shutdown, the staff worked remotely and continued processing exemptions, and kept in contact via online or by phone with Cook County personnel and township residents to resolve property tax issues.

Again, please call our office at 708.331.1591 with any questions and set an appointment for office visits.

*Thank you and stay safe.*



*Willie Jones*



*John Lord*

# Clerks's Office

The COVID 19 shutdown certainly affected all aspects of how the private sector and government operated on a daily basis. As trying as it was, the Clerk's Office was able to maintain some sense of normalcy with many of our responsibilities including the preparation of bids and bid openings for upcoming projects along with answering calls from constituents.

The one bright spot through this is that I had the opportunity to participate in our Produce Day with the many volunteers who stepped up to make it a success. I was fortunate to be teamed up with the New Faith Baptist Church volunteers who distributed free face masks to all that came to receive produce. *Thank you for your great job!*

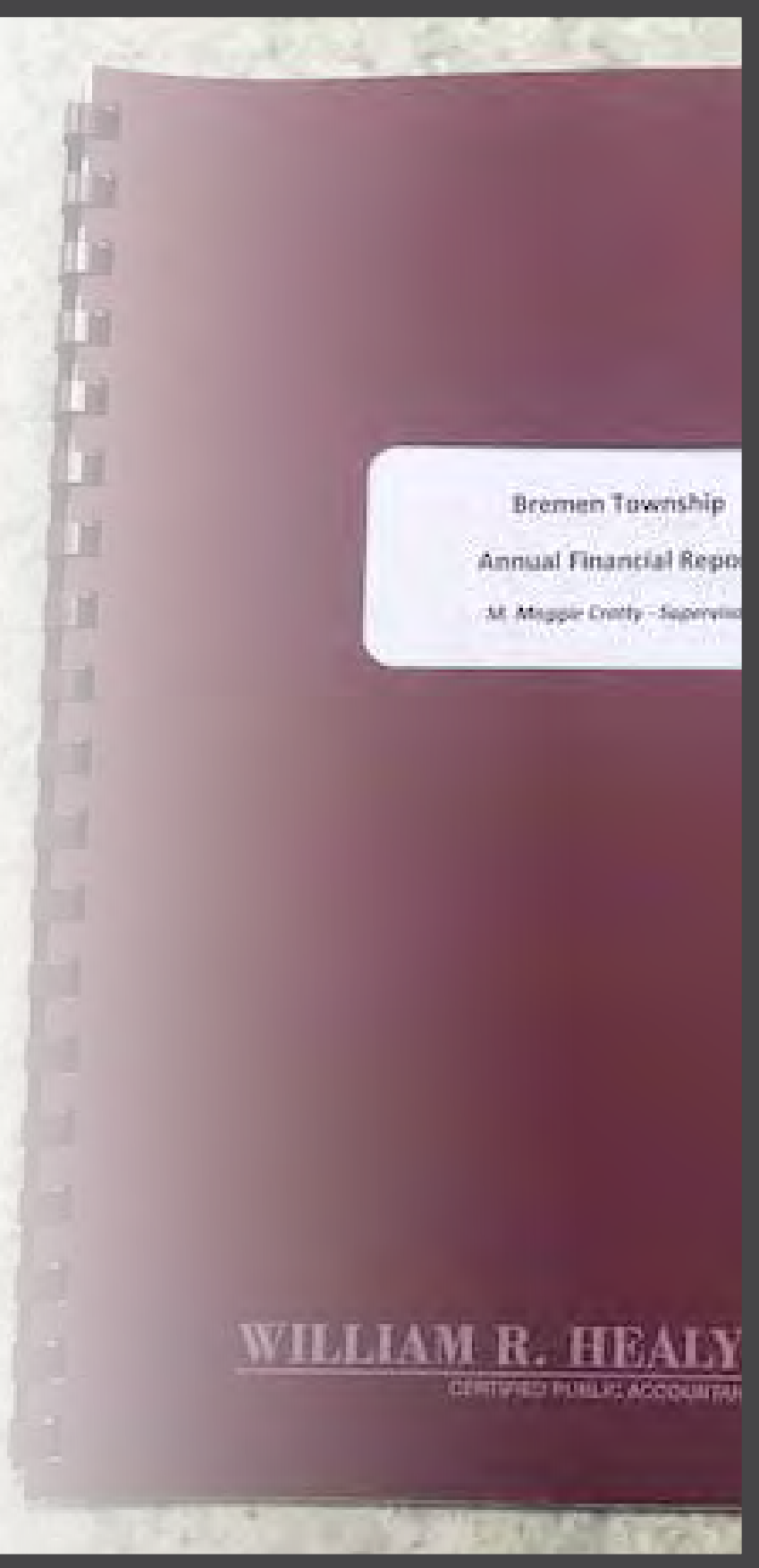
# High Marks for Bremen Township Audit



Bremen Township is pleased to announce the findings of its most recent Financial Audit. The audit found that Bremen Township is on firm financial ground, debt free, along with cash balances in every department.

Independent financial professionals have declared that the financial policies that the township officials has established and implemented have earned a triple AAA rating from Moodys along with the highest rating of AAAm from Standard and Poor's rating services. A fund rated "AAAm" demonstrates extremely strong capacity to maintain principal stability. AAAm is the highest principal fund rating assigned by S&P Global ratings. This is no small feat considering that Bremen Township is one of the lowest taxing bodies in the State of Illinois.

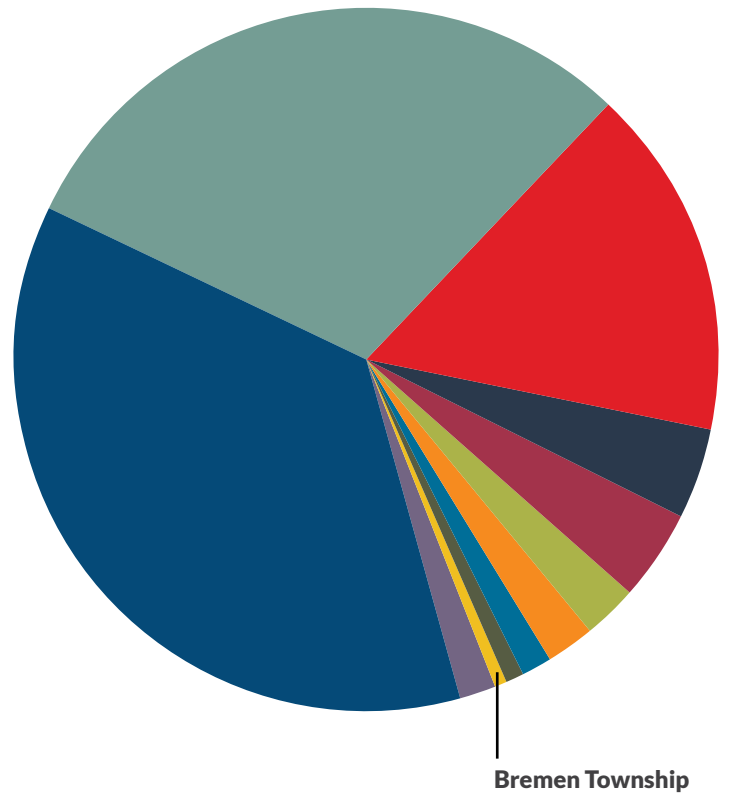
Supervisor Crotty extends her thanks and appreciation to the Board of Trustees along with all the departments for their commitment to making fiscal responsibility a priority.



# Property Tax Distribution

A typical Bremen Township resident pays approximately \$7,500.00 per year in property taxes to multiple taxing bodies. To help better understand where your tax dollars are spent, we have listed the average percentage of taxes paid to each entity.

This pie chart illustrates the average distribution of your tax dollars. This clearly shows that **for every 10 dollars of property taxes paid by homeowners, Bremen Township receives approximately only 10 cents**, and concludes along with reinforcing the fact that township government is one of our greatest values. In turn, Bremen Township provides a wide range of services that are available to each and every resident of the thirteen municipalities that comprise and are within our boundaries.



Grammar and Junior High School Districts	36.9%
Bremen District 228	30.18%
Your City/Town	16.34%
Your Park District	4.17%
South Suburban College District	4.05%
Water Reclamation District	2.63%
County of Cook	2.12%
Your Library District	1.52%
Cook County Public Safety	0.82%
<b>Bremen Township</b>	<b>0.57%</b>
Other	1.51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Note: This listing is intended to serve as a guide for homeowners and your City/Town/Village/Park District/Library percentages may vary. The one constant is that Bremen Township maintains the lowest amount of revenue.*

# Value of Partnerships

- + Bremen Township values the partnerships that we have established with other government agencies and non-profit organizations to provide an array of services available to our residents. By combining forces, it allows us to enhance and expand the many services that residents depend on. Listed below are some of the partnerships we have formed and the benefits for the recipients.

## Together We Cope/ Chicago Food Depository

This program distributes free fresh produce on the second Friday of each month to any individual or family in need at our Markham facility. So far this year we have served 8,008 individuals and 2,455 households with 142,829 pounds of farm fresh produce, dairy and other food items. This program relies on our army of volunteers for distribution and is provided at no cost to the taxpayers.

## Age Options

This program provides healthy, nutritious daily lunches to seniors in our senior cafe at our Oak Forest facility for a recommended donation of four dollars. The cafe also serves as a meeting place for seniors to get together, play board games, or just visit one another and enjoy a cup of coffee at no charge. Even through the Covid 19 shut down we continued to serve meals with a takeout drive thru operation. In addition we also distributed non-perishable food packages with our Senior Wheels Program to senior residents who were homebound. Contact our Senior Services Department at (708)687-8220 for more details. This also is funded by Age Options, but not the taxpayers of Bremen Township.

## NAMI

This partnership is one of the latest additions of services offered and available to the residents of Bremen Township. NAMI is the National Alliance of Mental Illness, which presents classes and seminars for families affected by mental illness and stress issues in the meeting rooms at our Oak Forest facility along with online presentations. The Covid 19 situation has had a devastating effect on so many people in all walks in life and NAMI is a free benefit to all who seek assistance during this ongoing crisis. Bremen Township welcomes them to establishing their presence and support. For details call Director Marianne Bithos at (708)351-6871.

## Benefit Access Program

Providing License Plate Discount and/or RTA Free Ride Card for either Seniors or Persons with Disabilities

## Salvation Army Service Extension

Provides Emergency Assistance during Crisis Situations and assists in identifying other Community Resources which may provide additional assistance.

## PACE A.D.A.

PACE bus tickets are sold at 1/2 price to Bremen Township residents.

## Sertoma

Sertoma is one of the most well known and respected organizations in the State of Illinois. Bremen Township is very proud to join forces with them to establish an outreach program focused on the youth of Bremen Township who may be in the need of counseling. This program is designed to identify and offer assistance to the youth of every community within Bremen Township and ensure that their needs are met. Bullying, peer pressure, and suicide prevention are a few of the trials that our young people face and deal with, and we welcome this professional and accountable organization to our township. Again, this important addition is no cost to the taxpayers of the township.

## Coast 2 Coast Rx

Free Discount Prescription Card to any Bremen Township resident. Save up to 75% on prescriptions at participating pharmacies. No health restrictions.

## CEDA

CEDA's Department of Family Support and Community Engagement (FSACE) offers a range of services to Bremen Township residents, which assist low-income people attaining skills, knowledge and the resources necessary to achieve self sufficiency.





# Willis Bartee Unsung Hero



**Bremen Township takes pleasure in introducing to you Willis Bartee, one of the unsung heroes of the township.**



Since our partnership with Together We Cope in our Produce Day, Mr. Bartee has been a mainstay and leader of the volunteer corps that provide fresh, free produce to our residents each month. Not once since this combined effort has Willis ever missed a day of volunteering. Like a mail carrier, Mr. Bartee has been on the front line delivering and distributing much appreciated produce to families in need. He has been out in the elements during rain, sleet and snow ensuring that any resident does not go away hungry. Even the pandemic shut down did not deter his commitment because he devised a drive through plan to keep other volunteers and recipients safe and continue the program.

Mr. Bartee epitomizes the vital role of volunteerism that so many residents of our communities depend on and serves as a perfect example of a good neighbor. We at Bremen Township are proud to have Willis on our team and call him a friend, not only to us, but to all the residents of our communities. A well deserved thank you from all of us. You do a great job.



## Coming Soon

We are in the final planning stages for the installation of our new walking path that will be installed at the west end of our facility on Oak Park Avenue. This vacant path of unused land will be transformed into a picturesque garden walkway for all of our residents to enjoy.

The path will encircle the entire approximately three acres of vacant parcel, with benches and rest areas along the way. These added features are a joint effort between Bremen Township and local small businesses. These features will not only enhance the walking path but all help defray costs to the project to the private sector. Bremen Township is proud to have formed this partnership with many of our local businesses for the benefits of our residents.

Supervisor Crotty stated that this is another example of government and the private sector working together for the benefit of our communities and urges residents to support your local businesses.

For more information about sponsoring a bench or rest station, please contact our office at [info@brementownship.net](mailto:info@brementownship.net)



## THE BREMEN BEACON

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16361 Kedzie Parkway  
Markham, IL  
708.333.9530  
info@bremetownship.net  
www.bremetownship.org



“ The essence of life is to  
serve others and do good. ”

— ARISTOTLE