

Mantrap Township

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

February 2023



Image credit: vecteezy.com

Welcome to the digital newsletter!

A lot can change in a year...

The end of 2022 brought just that.

First, we bid a fond farewell in December to longtime board members Steve Keranen (Planning Commission & Supervisor, 20 years) and John Weber (Treasurer, 25.75 years - those decimal places count!). Both dedicated countless hours (John probably has an exact count) and Monday night meetings to ensure your tax dollars went where they were needed most.

Second, our longtime road contractor, Levi Holsapple, announced he was retiring. He bladed his last road for us in October.

Please thank these folks for their efforts through the years. They've made things better for all of us!

The end of 2022 wasn't all about saying goodbye; We also welcomed new faces!

2022 was an election year and several townspeople, as well as a few folks from our neighboring townships, offered their help to make it all go smoothly. We can't thank them enough for their service!

As a result of that election, you have a new Supervisor (Russ Keller) and a new Treasurer (Laura Scanlon). Kim Olson has taken over as Town Board Chair. Jeff Stacey of Jeff's Professional Tree Service, Inc. has contracted with us to perform all township road maintenance. That's a big relief as we had exhausted all our options by the time he came to us.

Finally, you may have heard we will also elect a new County Commissioner for District 4 later this year. Hubbard County will be handling the special election via mail ballots in May (primary) and August.

Please be sure to give the new faces a warm welcome and thank them for taking on these positions.



Notes from the Chair

By Kim Olson

Greetings from your new chairman! There's a lot I need to cover and I'm not fond of writing paragraphs, so I'm going to give you the information in bullet points. 😊

Roads:

- Rough start to season due to spring-like conditions
- New contractor doing very well
- Maintenance costs have increased due to inflation/fuel prices
- Updating snow plowing policy, including mailbox guidelines
- Unless it's an EMERGENCY (one where you would call 9-1-1 or the sheriff's department), do not contact the contractor directly for any road issues; instead, contact a supervisor

Gravel:

- Out of gravel; no local source to rebuild stockpile
- Utilizing the county gravel contract starting in 2024; expected to cost \$16K per mile
- Developing prioritized schedule for re-graveling (county graveling contract occurs every 2 years)

Island View Drive:

- Needs major repair
- Year-round weight restriction of 5 tons per axle
- DNR will provide culverts; township has to provide installation
- Researching options/costs and plan to hold special meeting in early summer

Land Use Plan/Ordinance:

- Currently being reviewed/updated
- Requires property owner input; survey link is on our website
- Land Use Plan update will drive ordinance updates

Elections:

- Excellent pool of 2022 election judges, but we could use more
- Special election this year for county commissioner of our district
- To make things easier for the county, election will be mail-in

Internet:

- Arvig laying new cable for higher speed internet this spring
- Maps will be posted on the township website

Motocross event:

- Conditional use permit granted to hold one motocross event per year on the agricultural land at the corner of Cty 40 and Cty 86
- This year's event is 25 June
- Event has specific conditions, including compliance with state noise regulations

Newsletter/Website:

- Considering eliminating annual newsletter because it takes a lot of time/effort to put together, but is only a snapshot in time
- Website has the same information as the newsletter, but is current
- Site map of website is included in this newsletter

If you have any questions or comments about these topics or any other, please come to a township meeting or contact one a supervisor, clerk, or treasurer.



Nevis Fire District News

By Milica Stanfel

The Nevis Fire Department is led by Chief Josh Winters and Assistant Chief Brent Nickalson. There are currently 22 firefighters.

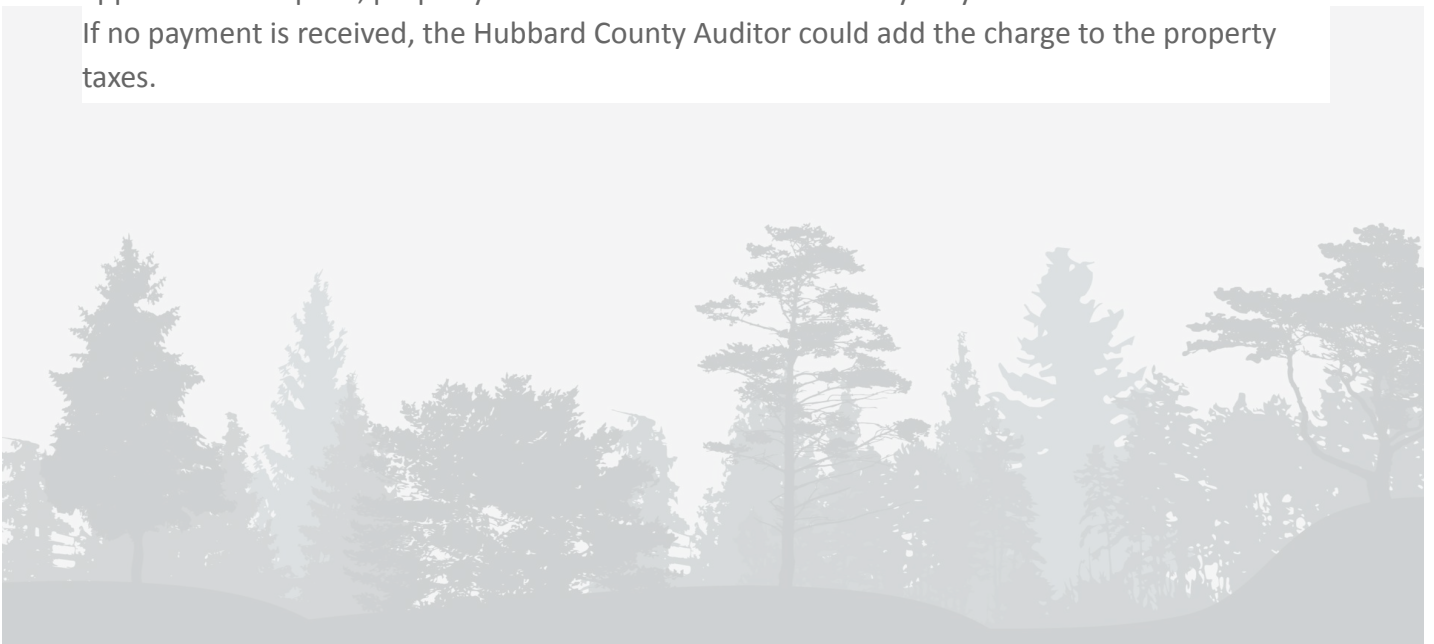
The department purchased 20 new air packs allowing each firefighter to have their own.

There will be an 18% increase in the fire budget payable in 2024. Mantrap Township's 2023 fire contract amount is \$30,591.00; it will increase to \$35,741.00 in 2024.

Plans for the coming year include:

- Raises for firefighters
- Adding new space for equipment on the south side of the building
- Replacing the obsolete truck radios at a cost of \$4,000-\$7,000 each; they will be applying for a grant from the state.
- They will no longer repair or lease the radio tower in Nevis; instead each firefighter will use their cell phone to communicate.
- Other priorities include replacing the First Response Fire Truck and finding a 3000-gallon Tender.

New: The fire department is going to request Nevis City Council to allow them to charge for fire calls. This would allow them to collect money to help pay for new equipment. If the city approves the request, property owners would receive a bill they may submit to their insurance. If no payment is received, the Hubbard County Auditor could add the charge to the property taxes.



Financial Matters

By Laura Scanlon

You may already know that John Weber has retired from his nearly 26-year tenure as township treasurer. I have enjoyed spending time with him "learning the ropes." John has been a passionate advocate of our community and waters for over a quarter of a century, serving Mantrap Township with the attention to detail and ethical strength of character that citizens expect. We will miss him in this role and wish him and Marlene the very best!

I am excited to begin my journey as township treasurer. My husband and I have been residents of Mantrap Township for nearly five years. Hubbard County is where we have been vacationing with family for the past 20 years, and have made many, many memories. I retired from a career as a high school business education instructor and have held a variety of positions since retiring from the classroom—so maybe I'm not really retired! Anyway, let's get started!

On January 23, Mantrap Township Board held its annual Budget Meeting. Table 1 provides data that includes the 2024 proposed levies totaling \$283,800. This is an increase of 35% over 2023 levies.

Important Date: The Annual Meeting is Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Township Hall. Mantrap residents have the opportunity to discuss and vote on the 2024 proposed levies.

Table 1	Proposed Levy/Comparison			Increase over 2023 Levies	
	2022 Actual	2023 Levy	2024 Proposed	\$	%
General Fund	\$71,293.01	\$61,691.00	\$73,550.00	\$11,859.00	19%
Road & Bridge Fund	\$107,401.62	\$117,000.00	\$174,500.00	\$57,500.00	49%
Fire Fund	\$33,372.00	\$30,600.00	\$35,750.00	\$5,150.00	16%
Capital Improvement Fund	\$1,529.82	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Total	\$213,596.45	\$209,291.00	\$283,800.00	\$74,509.00	35%

General Fund: The township operates four funds as indicated in Table 1. The increase to the General Fund includes administrative costs to conduct three elections including: presidential primary in March, primary in August and general election in November. The board has assembled a 5-member Planning Commission who meet monthly to research and make recommendations on land-use issues and ordinances. AIS costs continue to increase for watercraft inspection hours and testing for veliger/spiny water fleas. The 2024 proposed levy for General Fund compares closely to the 2022 actual costs. General Fund Reserve goal is \$100,000.

Approximate Breakdown:

- 2024 presidential election year costs including public notices +5,500
- Planning Commission monthly meetings +4,000
- AIS testing/watercraft inspection costs +2,500
- 3.6% increase for online treasurer responsibilities +1,200
- Increase in land use estimate +550
- 3% increase for Assessor per contract +500
- Office needs include new printer/supplies +400
- Decrease in computer equipment as 2 laptops have been purchased -2,800

Road & Bridge Fund: R&B accounts for the township's largest expense. In 2022, 78% of fund monies paid for snow removal and summer grading. The other 22% paid for mowing and trimming, salt/sand, Calcium Chloride/Durablend applications, weed spraying, crack sealer. The township services 29.4 miles of road. Road & Bridge Reserve goal increased from \$200,000 to \$250,000.

- Need to replenish township gravel pile which is depleted
- Calcium Chloride/Durablend costs continue to rise
- Navigating new road contractor costs throughout the year
- Planning for Island View culvert installation and impending road repair
- Creating and implementing an established cycle of road repair including gravel and signage
- Prepare for anomalies (ie: winter ice storm that pulled down trees over/into roads, need for winter grading due to ice/melt impact on gravel roads)

Fire Fund: The 2024 fire budget of \$162,460 presented by the City of Nevis presents an 18.2% increase over the 2022 actual costs of \$137,465. Five local municipalities share in this total fire cost. The City of Nevis and four townships: Nevis, Crow Wing, Mantrap and Thorpe each pay a percentage of this bill based on the following criteria:

- Average # of fire calls over the last 3 years

- 2018 structure values
- Population of community

This year, Mantrap Township is responsible for 22% of the fire budget which is equal to \$35,741.20. Fire Fund Reserve goal increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000.

Capital Improvement Fund: No levy request for Capital Improvement for 2024. One electrical project was completed in 2022 in the amount of \$1,529.82.

Table 2 presents the township's liquid assets at the end of 2022. While the account achieved a short-lived milestone balance (half a million), please keep in mind that the balance fluctuates monthly based on revenue received and monthly expenses. Thanks to the careful attention to detail by John Weber and the fiscal planning and thoughtful decisions made by your board, Mantrap Township's financial status continues to remain strong.

Table 2: Mantrap Township Financial Status 2022		
January 1, 2022	Opening Balance	\$ 484,623.93
	Plus Revenues	\$ 233,905.63
	Minus Expenses	\$ 213,596.45
December 31, 2022	Closing Balance	\$ 504,933.11

Financial Reserves

By Kim Olson

I've gotten quite a few questions about the township's financial reserves recently, so I thought I would explain why we have them. Our current reserve goals are \$100K for the general fund, \$250K for road and bridge, and \$50K for fire.

1. The township can not overdraw on accounts. We have to have a cushion.
2. Budget/levy cycle: Most of the township's revenue comes from the property tax levy. The board develops a budget based on anticipated/estimated expenses in January for the following year. The levy, approved by the voters at the annual meeting in March, is collected the following year. Actual expenses are different. The reserves compensate for unexpected differences. An example from 2023 is the fire contract—it increased 18%, which was a larger increase than expected. Road maintenance costs are particularly unpredictable.
3. Catastrophic events/debt: There are strict rules about township debt. It's not an easy process. In the case of a catastrophic event (such as the culverts failing on Island View Dr.), the township needs quick access to funds.
4. Future projects/expenses and grants: Building up reserves and accruing interest is better than taking out a loan and paying interest. We do apply for grants if they are available. Examples include spreading the cost of the gravel contract over 2 years instead of 1 and having money set aside for a purchase of a fire truck.

Continuing to Shield Mantrap Lakes from AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species)

By Laura Scanlon

Background: In 2012, the township began participating in efforts to safeguard Spider, the three Crooked Lakes, Ojibway and Mantrap from AIS. These efforts are proactive as early detection is the most effective form of AIS defense. There are two components the township has supported to date: 1) contributions to watercraft inspection hours and 2) veliger/spiny waterflea testing.

Watercraft Inspection Initiative: At its January 9th board meeting, your Supervisors approved an agreement and issued a check to Hubbard County Environmental Services to support 516 supplemental hours, not funded by the State. Costs have increased from \$22 per hour in 2022 to \$25 per hour in 2023 to cover the administration costs of hiring and scheduling, as well as paying the wages of our public access inspectors.

Breakdown by Lake:

- Spider Lake: 280 total hours including 112 township-paid, 72 Spider Lake Association-paid and 96 state-funded
- East Crooked Lake: 244 total hours including 88 township-paid, 92 East Crooked Lake Association-paid and 64 state-funded
- Big Mantrap Lake: 524 total hours including 152 township-paid, 212 from other sources and 160 state-funded

The board commends Spider and East Crooked Lake Associations for their continued financial commitment and advocacy in protecting township lakes from AIS.

AIS efforts have been mostly successful. Currently, Big Mantrap is the only township lake listed on the DNR Infested Waters List for confirmation of Eurasian Watermilfoil (June, 2020) discovered in an isolated area of the lake near the access. Big Mantrap Lake Association continues to monitor the lake in order to prevent further spread. <https://mantraplake.org/ais>

Table 1 summarizes the costs of the watercraft inspection component to date. The township has paid nearly 50% of the total cumulative cost of watercraft inspection hours of \$145,943 over the past 12 years.

Table 1: Watercraft Inspection Costs 2012-2023				
	Township-Paid	Spider Lake-Paid	East Crooked Lake -Paid	State-Funded
2012-2016	\$ 19,304.50	\$ 1,120.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 16,092.00
2017	\$ 6,897.50	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 3,848.00
2018	\$ 6,323.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 3,848.00
2019	\$ 7,534.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 4,368.00
2020	\$ 7,842.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,480.00	\$ 3,024.00
2021	\$ 7,842.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,192.00
2022	\$ 8,352.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 4,576.00
2023	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 4,000.00
12-Year Total	\$ 72,895.00	\$ 13,720.00	\$ 16,380.00	\$ 42,948.00
% Share	49.9%	9.4%	11.2%	29.4%

AIS Lake Sampling: The board is supporting an agreement with Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District to sample water on Spider and the three Crooked Lakes. Table 2 recaps the cost of AIS early detection efforts. Note that from 2012-2020, costs reflect veliger sampling only. Beginning in *2021, costs include both veliger and spiny waterflea testing. Two samples will be taken, one in June and one in July, when veliger activity is highest. RMB Labs will do the testing.

Table 2: Veliger/Spiny Waterfleas Sampling Costs			
2012-2016	\$7,917.50	5 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked, West Crooked, Ojibway
2017	\$1,473.94	3 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked
2018	\$1,528.32	3 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked
2019	\$1,548.60	3 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked
2020	\$1,660.80	3 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked
*2021	\$2,042.16	3 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked
*2022	\$2,556.96	4 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked, West Crooked
*2023	\$2,635.50	4 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked, West Crooked
12-year Total	\$21,363.78		

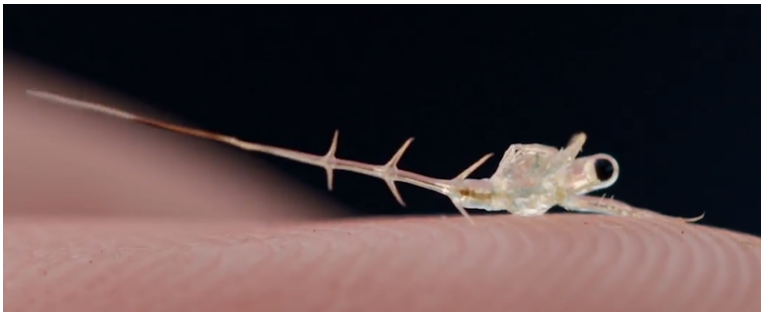
Did You Know? Veligers are the immature form of the very aggressive zebra mussels. Adult zebra mussels grow up to 1.5 inches and are clam-like with two shells joined at the hinge. They are filter eaters and compete with native fish for food. Their shells are sharp and can cut swimmers' feet, creating the need to wear shoes wherever zebra mussels are present.



Female zebra mussels are capable of producing 100,000-500,000 eggs each year. The microscopic larvae or veligers begin to form shells within 2-3 weeks, then settle and attach to any firm surface using their byssal threads. Mussels live on lake bottoms and attach to boats, nets, docks, swim rafts, boat lifts, rocks and can be moved from water to water on any of these objects. They also can attach to aquatic plants, making it critical to remove all aquatic vegetation before leaving a lake. Microscopic larvae may be carried in water contained in bait buckets, bilges or any other water moved from an infested lake.

*Information obtained from MN DNR, HC COLA and MAISRC websites.
Image from MAISRC.*

Spiny Waterfleas are tiny crustaceans measuring less than ½ inch with a single, long tail. The multiple barbs on the tail create a problem for predators. They disrupt the aquatic food web by competing with smaller fish for native zooplankton. In addition, they reproduce rapidly. Clumps look and feel like gelatin. Grouped together, they can clog eyelets of fishing poles and destroy fishing gear. No known method of eradication at this time. *Images are credited to MAISRC, Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center.*



Remember—we can all do our part to keep AIS from spreading. CLEAN. DRAIN. DISPOSE.

Additional Resources:

Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC)

<https://maisrc.umn.edu/>

MN DNR Infested Waters List

<https://www.eddmaps.org/midwest/tools/infestedwaters/>

Hubbard County Decontamination Station Information

http://www.co.hubbard.mn.us/departments/environmental_services/ais/educational_information.php

Watershed Health Assessment Framework for Lakes (WHAF)

<https://arcgis.dnr.state.mn.us/ewr/whaflakes/scale/county/id/27057>

Property Taxes: A Brief Explanation

“Taxes” might as well be a four-letter word, but they fund things that affect us all every day - from schools, fire & police protection to road maintenance and so much more. So what goes into determining your bill?

First of all, this is a very complicated topic, but we'll try to keep it very short and sweet. The property tax statement that arrives at the end of March/beginning of April this year started almost two years ago. It's a process that involves the County, the Township and YOU!

It all starts with property sales. The County Assessor's Office reviews sales and adjusts property values to follow what the real estate market does. The MN Department of Revenue closely monitors the process. *The sales used to set new values as of January 2, 2023 happened between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022.* So, what you paid for your home in October 2021 can impact the taxes you and others will pay in 2024.

In January 2023, your town board held a Budget Meeting to review the revenues & expenses in 2022 and set the levy for 2024. You will get to vote on that levy at the Annual Meeting in March 2023.

Later in March 2023, the County will mail the 2024 Notices of Valuation and Classification to every property owner (they are in the same envelope as your 2023 property tax statements).

In April and May, townships and cities will hold Local Boards of Appeal & Equalization where property owners may appeal those new property values and/or classifications. **Your town board will hear appeals this year on April 26th at 1:00 PM** and determine if your property has been valued/classified fairly and equitably. The County Board of Appeal & Equalization will do the same in June.



In September 2023, the township will report the final approved levy to the County Auditor. The Auditor will use it to calculate the local tax rate for 2024 taxes.

In November 2023, the Auditor will calculate preliminary property taxes for 2024 & mail Notices of Proposed Taxes. The final 2024 property tax statements will be mailed by the end of March 2024.

To sum it all up, think of the township's levy as a big pie.

Your property value determines how large or small your piece of that pie is. The township cannot collect any more tax than it levies for, so if your slice of pie got smaller, someone else's got larger.

Website

By Kim Olson (webmaster)

Keep up-to-date on what's happening in the township by using the [Subscribe Now!](#) button on the bottom left hand side of the homepage.

The homepage has a calendar of events, current news and notices, and links to other website sections.

About Us: FAQs, township map, demographics, and useful links (including new resident information)

Government: meeting minutes and agenda items, calendar, election information, and news and notices

Land Use and Permits: downloadable applications and fee schedule, land use ordinance, land use plan, and developer's road agreement

Staff Directory: contact information for township personnel and road assignments

Lakes: description of the main lakes and aquatic invasive species information

Annual Meeting - 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at the town hall.