

# Washington Township News

PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



## 2018 Freightliner

### Winter Ready

With the addition of our new 2018 Freightliner, the township is ready to take on winter. We have taken on the winter maintenance for Dad Burnhams and Hetzels Church Roads. See page 3.

## Taxes

### Where is my tax money going?

Do you know what you are paying for each time you pay your tax bills? Turn to page 2 to find out where the money goes.

## Recycling

### Why is it gone?

As of October 12, 2018, the township stopped the recycling program. Many factors lead to this decision, which was not an easy one. Please turn to page 4 to see the difficult decision that had to be made.



### WHO IS GETTING MY MONEY?

We all pay taxes, at our employers and if you own a home. While most understand what is going on in their paychecks, they sometimes don't understand their tax bills. Below is a description of where your money goes.

Working for the township I've heard many residents say the following statements: "Isn't that why I pay taxes", "I pay my taxes, the township should...", "I pay enough taxes to this township", "the township keeps raising my taxes", "aren't we tax payers too" and many others regarding the taxes you pay to the township.

Here's the truth. Each year we receive 4 tax bills. Two of them are real estate tax bills. The first one, mailed out by March 1<sup>st</sup> are for the county and the municipality you live in. The second one, mailed out by July 1<sup>st</sup> are for the school district in which you live in. The third one (not every school district has this tax) is called an occupational tax. This tax says, because you are working you should help pay for extra things the school district needs. The last tax is called Per Capita tax. This is a small flat tax, between \$5 and \$15 that goes to the municipality and county. Below is a chart explaining who is getting your money and at what rate.

Who benefits	Tax Paid	Mils Paid	Flat Tax Paid	Who you pay
Pine Grove School District	Real Estate	40.75		Berkheimer
Pine Grove School District	Occupational Tax		\$ 275.00	Berkheimer
Schuylkill County	Real Estate	15.38		Keith Heinbach
Schuylkill County	Funded Debt	0.6		Keith Heinbach
Schuylkill County	Local Service Tax		\$ 5.00	Keith Heinbach
Washington Township	Real Estate	3.5		Keith Heinbach
Washington Township	Local Service Tax		\$ 10.00	Keith Heinbach

You may ask what does all that mean. Washington Township's assessed value for 2019 is 65,290,210. Below is a chart that shows you that Washington Township only receives 6% of the taxes you pay.

Tax Paid	Mils Paid	65,290,210	
Real Estate Pine Grove School District	40.75	\$ 2,660,576.06	68%
Real Estate Schuylkill County	15.38	\$ 1,004,163.43	26%
<b>Real Estate Washington Township</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>\$ 228,515.74</b>	<b>6%</b>
Funded Debt Schuylkill County	0.6	\$ 39,174.13	1%
		\$ 3,932,429.35	100%

You may be wondering how your tax bill keeps increasing? Below is the answer. For the past 3 years your taxes have increased, but not by Washington Township.

	County Real Estate Mils	County Funded Debt Mils	School District Real Estate Mils	School District Occupation	<b>Township Mils</b>
2016	13.83	0.15	38.9	\$ 200.00	<b>3.5</b>
2017	14.83	0.15	39.75	\$ 250.00	<b>3.5</b>
2018	15.38	0.6	40.75	\$ 275.00	<b>3.5</b>

You may also wonder how Washington Township stacks up against other municipalities. Below is a sample of the taxes paid by residents that live in the Pine Grove and neighboring Blue Mountain School Districts (all this information can be found on the County's website). Out of the 15 townships and boroughs listed below, Washington Township is #11, with only 4 municipalities with lower taxes than us.

#### Pine Grove School District

FRAILEY TOWNSHIP	9.2500
PINE GROVE TOWNSHIP	1.5000
TREMONT TOWNSHIP	7.0000
WASHINGTON TWP	3.5000
PINE GROVE BOROUGH	14.0000
TREMONT BOROUGH	14.0000

#### Blue Mountain School District

EAST BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP	5.6140
NORTH MANHEIM TOWNSHIP	6.5000
WAYNE TOWNSHIP	1.0000
WEST BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP	3.0000
AUBURN BOROUGH	7.5000
CRESSONA BOROUGH	7.9600
DEER LAKE BOROUGH	2.2600
NEW RINGGOLD BOROUGH	6.5800
ORWIGSBURG BOROUGH	9.0000

If you have a question on any of your tax bills, please use the contact Information below:

- Pine Grove School District real estate and occupation tax: Berkheimer 610-599-3141.
- Washington Township real estate and per capita tax: Tax Collector, Keith Heinbach 570-345-2434
- Schuylkill County real estate, funded debt & per capita tax: Tax Assessment Office 570-628-1025

## Winter Maintenance

In 2017, Washington Township purchased a new 2018 Freightliner Truck. That same year the township also began talks with PennDOT regarding winter maintenance on some state-owned roads throughout the township. At the regular monthly meeting, held August 20, 2018 the Board of Supervisors accepted a five-year contract, beginning October 15, 2018 to maintain Dad Burnhams and Hetzels Church Roads. What does this mean? Between the dates of October 15<sup>th</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, the township is responsible for keeping these two roads plowed during winter weather.

What this doesn't mean. The township does not own Dad Burnhams or Hetzels Church roads and is not responsible for any other type of maintenance on them. If you have other issues like pot holes, downed trees, water runoff, small dead animals or any other maintenance issue, please contact PennDOT at 570-385-7812. Larger animals, such as deer, bear or elk are the responsibility of the game commission and can be reached at 610-926-3136 or 610-926-3137.

## RIGHT-OF-WAY

Right-of-ways are often ignored by home owners by placing encroachments within them, such as lights, trees, bushes, basketball hoops, fences, walls, etc. An encroachment is any object, placed without permission within the legal limits of the right-of-way. Most roads are 33-feet wide; that is 22-feet of roadway and 11-feet of right-of-way (5.5 feet on each side of the road).

What does this mean for you as a property owner and resident? It is your responsibility to keep the right-of-way clear, in the event the Township must use it. If you have something within the right-of-way and the Township accidentally hits it, mows it, or plows it shut it is not the Township's responsibility to repair or replace it. The only exception to this, is mailboxes and utility poles; however, if your mailbox is damaged during snow plowing, it is not the Township's responsibility to replace or fix it. This holds true for the state-owned roads within the Township as well.

Know where the right-of-way is and keep it clear.

**Where has the Recycling gone?**

On Friday, October 12, 2018 Washington Township stop its recycling program. It was not an easy decision by the Board, but it was necessary due to the increasing cost of recycling.

The idea of the program so many years ago, was to collect enough recyclables that the benefit would outweigh the cost or at least break even. For the first year that theory did in fact work; with the township making \$805.30 by the end of 2012. Every year since the cost began to increase for several reasons:

- Non-residents usage increased
- Comingling materials yielded a lower or no rebate
- Removing of larger nonrecyclable items dumped
- Hazards due to items left when containers were full
- Slow response times from vendor

The cost over the past few years has been as follows:

- 2013- \$1,973
- 2014- \$2,493.60
- 2015- \$3,175.20
- 2016- \$3,707.10
- 2017- \$5,415.55
- 2018- \$5,791.36

The Township made every effort to find an alternative, but were faced with the same response. Recycling on our level will only get more expensive. Therefore, with County recycling receptacles at Wayne & Pine Grove Townships, the Board made the tough decision to discontinue the program. Thank you for the many years of support.

**Washington Township**

225 Frantz Road

Pine Grove, PA 17963

Ph: 570-915-6113 Fax: 570-915-6482

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8AM-4PM

Closed Saturday & Sunday

website: [www.washtwpschco.org](http://www.washtwpschco.org)

**MEETINGS**

The Board of Supervisors of Washington Township meet the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm in the office building conference room.

**OFFICIALS**

Leon L. Lutz-Chairman of the Board

Wendell S. Gainer, Jr.-Vice-Chairman of the Board

Lynn A. Brown- Supervisor

Dawn A. Koch- Township Manager

Lynn A. Brown- Road Master

Richard J. Wiest- Solicitor

Ryan Fasnacht- Engineer

JB Environmental LLC 484-662-3910-

Sewage Enforcement Officer

Light Heigel & Associates, Inc. 800-257-2190-

Building Code Officers

Carl Stump- Emergency Management Coordinator

Mike Stalnecker- Fire Marshall

**To Police or not to Police...**

In 2019, the Township will be charged a \$25.00 Per Capita tax per resident, (man, woman, and child) from the State of Pennsylvania. This tax is to help off-set costs for State Police coverage within Washington Township. According to the 2010 census, Washington Township homes 3,033 residents. The cost to the Township for this new tax, based on the 2010 census will be \$75,825 per year. What are the Township's options?

1. Find it in the budget to pay the tax without passing the burden onto the residents.
2. Share the cost with the residents.
3. Hire its own officer.
4. Join with neighboring municipalities to share the burden of a police force.

Recently, neighboring municipalities have started holding meetings explaining the benefits of a shared police force. Washington Township has not been asked to be a part of this agreement and takes the stand that the benefit will not outweigh the cost. They are proposing an increase to their Per Capita tax to \$95. Sure, some in one municipality will save while the others will carry the burden of the increased tax. We would like to know if the residents of Washington Township would like a local police force or would prefer to stick with the State Police. Cast your vote at [www.washtwpschco.org](http://www.washtwpschco.org) or by calling 570-915-6113 (Address is required to vote.)