



## MTA Board of Directors *Talking Points* July 2023

### **Government Relations**

#### **Reminder – July 10 deadline to apply for Fire Equipment Grants**

Townships with part-time, on-call or volunteer firefighters only have until **July 10** to apply for a grant to purchase fire equipment through the MI Fire Equipment Grant Program. The program provides up to \$10,000 to purchase fire equipment like turnout gear, hard suction hoses, or first aid supplies. Communities with fire departments that are predominately on-call, part-time or volunteer in townships and in fire authorities. MTA encourages all members to take advance of this grant opportunity.

#### **Budget**

The Legislature wrapped up the FY 2024 budget at the end of June, passing the largest budget in the state's history. The Legislature and governor reached an agreement on the \$81.6 billion budget combined with \$6 billion in additional spending for the current fiscal year and approval of the Natural Resources Trust Fund projects. The budget contained increases in revenue sharing, \$1.6 billion for high-speed internet access, additional funding for local roads and bridges, funding for local water infrastructure projects and PFAS remediation, funding for the Presidential primary and implementation of proposal 2, funding for housing, and grants opportunities, The budget also included approximately \$1.5 billion in one-time direct enhancement grants with a large portion to fund public safety projects, economic development initiatives, and critical infrastructure projects in communities across Michigan. For more detail, see the June 30 *Insights* and the July edition of *Focus*.

#### **Election Issues**

Legislation to provide the statutory implementation requirements of Proposal 2022-2 was passed and now awaits the Governor's signature. The legislation includes requirements for the implementation of the 9 days of early voting, drop box requirements, permanent AV voter list, state-funded prepaid postage and state-paid drop boxes, signature matching for AV applications and ballots, AV ballot tracker and pre-election day processing. Also passed was a bill to allow increased precinct size to up to 5,000 active registered voters. MTA has provided detail in the June 30 *Insights* and the July *Focus* cover story.

#### **Sand and Gravel Mining Preemption**

MTA thanks all members who reached out to their legislators to share their opposition to House Bills 4526, 4527 and 4528—the legislation that would completely preempt all local authority over

sand and gravel mining operations in all Michigan communities. Your engagement had a large impact on no action on the bills. MTA and others opposing the bills continue to work to reach a compromise that retains local authority, and we encourage you to continue conversations with your legislator on the importance of retaining local authority (truck route, hours of operation, blasting hours, noise levels, dust, etc.) and a voice in the permitting process.

### **Solar PILT**

The solar PILT (payment-in-lieu of taxes) legislation will soon be signed into law by the Governor as it was passed by the House and Senate in the final days of June. The bills, House Bills 4317 and 4318, permit a township, city, or village, with approval of the state tax commission (STC), to grant a 20-year property tax exemption to a “qualified solar energy facility” (facility) that would pay a specific tax based on the electricity-generating capacity of the facility. Recent changes include a longer time period for local units to act on an application (increasing from 90 to 120 days) and clarification that the PILT would only apply to the equipment that was part of original application.

### **Other Legislation at the forefront**

While the Legislature is now on summer recess with only limited session days in July and August, there are several workgroups already in play on legislation. Some of these include creating a statewide septic code, revisions to the drain code, preemption of local authority on the siting of renewable facilities, the creation of a voting rights act, changes on stormwater infrastructure, and updates to the Open Meetings Act. Not all of these are beneficial to local authority but MTA plans to have a voice in the discussions.

### **Know your legislators**

While the Legislature is on summer recess, now is the perfect time to encourage your state representative and state senator to meet with your board and visit your township. It will allow you to build a strong relationship and become a resource for them as well as provide them with the impact of several legislative changes being proposed—including House Bills 4274 and 4275 that would provide statutory revenue funding to ALL local units of government. This would provide funding to 1,091 townships that received the funding prior to budget cuts in the early 2000s.

As always, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## **Knowledge Center – Education and Communications**

### **Summer educational opportunities**

Go back to school with MTA this summer—they’ve got something for everyone on your township team! You can join them in-person, online OR choose an on-demand class from their online learning center. Here’s a sneak peek at what’s coming your way this summer:

- Four hot topics will be featured at their U.P. event coming to Harris July 18 and 19. Classes include **cemetery management, financial fundamentals, planning & zoning insights** and **hot topics for township fire departments**.

- Two timely township topics are also coming to Cadillac in August. Catch an evening class on the **fundamentals of assessing and taxation** on Aug. 1 OR review funding options, legalities and ways to ensure **your township services** are hitting the mark at a full-day class on Aug. 2.
- MTA also offers a live one-hour webinar every month, including an insightful **Legislative Update** on July 12 and a review of lawful expenditures at **Spending Public Money** on Aug. 9.

Learn more or get registered at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org)