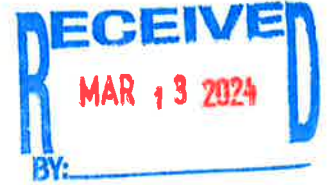


**TOWNSHIP REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENNIAL COMMITTEES ON  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT  
Townships**



I. Unit of government submitting this report:

NAME OF TOWNSHIP: Winnebago Township

Note: Any local government that levies a tax, other than a municipality or county must file this report. For Road Districts in counties with populations of less than 400,000 the highway commissioner may form a joint committee to prepare one combined report. See 50 ILCS 70/10(b-5).

II. Information about our Township

- A. We are located in Winnebago County. There are 14 townships in our county.
- B. The population of our Township is 4984, as of the 2020 census.
- C. We have 3 employees of the Township (not including elected officials).
- D. We have 6 employees in our Road District (not including elected officials).
- E. Our annual budget for 2023 is: \$722,150 (general) \$922,500 (Road District).
- F. Our Township's equalized assessed valuation for 2023 is 128,416,487.

III. Information about Our Committee

A. Committee Members:

- Township Supervisor: Greg Hodges
- Township Highway Commissioner: Aaron Rowley
- Township Trustee: Barry Palm
- Township Trustee: Dennis Cross
- Township Trustee: Craig McClure
- Township Trustee: Ray Heeren
- Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment): Joyce King
- Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment): Jim King
- Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment): Sue Jansen
- Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment): Molly Brauer
- Township Resident (Highway Comm. Appointment): Kyle Bolen

Note: Per 50 ILCS 70/10(b), the committee membership must include all the elected or appointed members of the township board (Supervisor and Trustees) and two residents appointed by the Supervisor. The residents can be the Assessor, Clerk or Collector, if you have one, or other residents of the Township, but these officials are not required to be on this Committee. The Supervisor may appoint more than two residents if deemed appropriate.

B. Dates that our Committee Met (50 ILCS 70/20)

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| First (Organizational) Meeting: | May 9, 2023    |
| Second Meeting:                 | July 11, 2023  |
| Third Meeting:                  | August 8, 2023 |
| Additional Meetings (List All): | March 12, 2024 |

IV. Programs Offered by our Township.

A. Our Township offers the following services and programs:

1. General Assistance

a. Township Government is one the oldest forms of government in Illinois. Townships perform three mandatory functions; administrating a general assistance program to qualifying residents, maintaining township road district highways and bridges, and appraising property values in all counties other than Cook County. They are given a variety of statutory responsibilities that may among other services include providing senior citizen services, conducting youth programs, appoint fire district trustees and maintain cemeteries. Townships may exercise only those powers conferred by statute. (Township Officials of Illinois, Laws and Duties Handbook Rev. 2022, p2). The township also maintains the Winnebago Township Westfield Facility which can be rented by small groups. Township Trustees audit and authorize payment of all bills for the township and road district.

2. Senior bus program

a. In the past we have provided a Senior Citizen's Bus to transport Senior Citizens with free pick-up and drop off at their residents and take them to a local restaurant for lunch and an occasional shopping trip to Walmart in Rockford or to limited special events. The bus was used by Prairie View Assisted Living for special events to transport their residents, with Prairie View reimbursing the township for driver and bus expenses. It was also used by Prairie View to allow residents to be a part of the Annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade. During COVID the bus transportation was program discontinued because of necessity. COVID caused an unexpected shortage of qualified CDL/passenger drivers and we have not been able to resume this service. In addition, the aging bus deteriorated from disuse. There has been little or no interest from the public in reinstating the senior citizen's bus service. The bus has since been sold.

3. Cemetery

a. The Winnebago Historical Society presented "A Walk through History at Winnebago Cemetery" on Saturday, September 9, 2023.

b. Although there is a Winnebago Cemetery Board, responsibility for the expense of maintaining the cemetery, which exceeds the revenues of the cemetery, are the responsibilities of the township. (ex; mowing, trimming, tree trimming and removal, snow removal, and other general maintenance.)

- 4. Highway Department that maintains approximately 34 miles of road
- 5. Building that provides low cost opportunity for senior and other resident

B. Other services/programs we could possibly provide:

V. Social Service Agreements

A. We partner with the following not for profits to offer social services (list all):

| <u>Entity:</u>                     | <u>Services Provided:</u>                  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Boy Scouts of America Troop5    | - Road/spring cleanup                      |
| 2. Vets Roll                       | - Donation of non-tax dollars              |
| 3. Troup 5                         | - Cemetery cleanup                         |
| 4. Winnebago Historical Society    | - Education                                |
| 5. Township Officials of Winnebago | - County Legislative issues, joint notices |
| 6. Township Hall to Community      | - Social, Church, Education Groups         |

B. Our residents have benefitted from these agreements in the following ways:

Cooperation has led to greater efficiency, services, and education to all agencies and organizations.

C. We have considered possibly offering the following social services or the following additional potential partnerships:

Updating senior transportation program

VI. Awards and Recognitions

Our Township has received the following awards, distinctions, and recognitions:

- A. Our township donated the old Town Hall building to the Winnebago Community Historical Society. In turn we took ownership of the old Westfield Grange Building, as they could no longer afford to pay the real estate taxes on as the group was aging out and diminishing. Township meetings are held in the facility on Westfield Road. There is an office area for the supervisor, road commissioner and part-time bookkeeper's use as well as record storage.
- B. Former Westfield Grange members and township residents continue to use the building once a month to play cards at no costs.

- C. Oversee Winnebago Cemetery and although there is a Winnebago Cemetery Board, responsibility for the expense of maintaining the cemetery, which exceeds the revenues of the cemetery is the responsibility of the township. Cemetery receipts and expenses are accounted for by the township. (ex; mowing, Memorial Day Flags, electricity, refuse disposal, trimming, tree trimming and removal, snow removal, and other general maintenance.)

VII. Intergovernmental Agreements

A. We partner with, or have Intergovernmental Agreements, with the following other Governments (List all):

| <u>Entity:</u>         | <u>Services Offered:</u>             |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Rockford Township      | General Assistance                   |
| Laona Township         | Assessor                             |
| Durand Township        | Assessor                             |
| Winnebago County Clerk | Filing                               |
| Winnebago County Board | Local issues, Constituents concerns. |
| Village of Winnebago   | Building share                       |

- B. Our Township's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation in the following way (list cost savings, avoiding duplicated services, etc.):
  1. Avoid duplicated services
  2. Utilize different expertise
  3. Cost savings

VIII. Review of Laws, Township Policies, Township Rules and Procedures, Township Training Materials, and other Documents

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Township to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

- X: State laws applicable to Townships, including, but not limited to the Township Code (60 ILCS)
- X: Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)
- X: Policy on public comment
- X: Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
- X: All of Elected Officials have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
- X: Schedule of All Township Regular Meetings for Calendar or Fiscal Year (5 ILCS 120/2.03)
- X: Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)
- X: Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- X: FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- X: Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- X: Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))

- X:** List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Township's Control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- X:** Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))
- N/A:** IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- X:** All of our Elected Officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5)
- X:** Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))
- X:** Our Intergovernmental Agreements
- X:** Our Social Service Agreements or Contracts
- X:** State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1)
- X:** Our budget and financial documents
- X:** Reports on government efficiency, including "Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments" by Wendell Cox (2016); "Local Democracy and Townships in the Chicagoland Area," by Wendell Cox, (January 2012).

What Have We Done Well?

- Operated on balanced budget
- Timely response to our constituents needs
- Worked well with other government agencies
- Maintained beautiful cemetery
- Senior transportation program
- Timely FOIA compliance

- IX. What Inefficiencies Did We Identify/What Are our Next Steps?  
Could be more involved at State and Federal levels involving Townships and funding.
- X. What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?  
Could take a more active role in State, Local, and Federal issues to make sure funding comes back to our constituents.
- XI. Studies on Governmental Efficiencies

In preparing this report, we reviewed several studies on local government efficiency. These studies show that:

- The average local government in Illinois serves 1800 residents compared to the national median of 2850 individuals
- Most townships in Illinois have no bonded indebtedness. Together with road districts they are an integral element of local democracy. Township expenditures have grown at a lower rate than those of any other level of government since 1992.
- Townships have lower labor costs and employ mostly part time employees.

- XII. Our committee's recommendations regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency:

Being the government closest to the people, Winnebago Township prides itself on providing timely services to its constituents. Strive to keep providing this.

Maintain our policy of a balanced budget.

Note: This Report must be filed with your County no later than 18 months after your first committee meeting.

Submitted by: Gregory M. Hodges   
Chairman, Decennial Efficiency Committee of Winnebago Township

Date: March 12, 2024