

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

I. Unit of government submitting this report:

NAME OF TOWNSHIP: Vernon Township

II. Information about our Township

- A. We are located in Lake County. There are 18 townships in our county.
- B. The population of our Township is 71,377, as of the 2020 census.
- C. We have 16 full time employees of the Township (not including elected officials).
- D. Our annual budget for FY 2024 is: \$6,524,915. (Including Capital Development Projects)
- E. Our Township's equalized assessed valuation for 2024 was \$4,236,458,631.

III. Information about Our Committee

A. Committee Members:

Township Supervisor Timothy Kobler

Township Trustee Philip Hirsh (Committee Chairperson)

Township Trustee Sheila Sebor

Township Trustee Gowri Magati

Township Trustee Marc Sender

Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment) George Yaeger

Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment) E. Brook Rosberg

Township Manager Todd Gedville

B. Dates that our Committee Met

First (Organizational) Meeting: June 8, 2023

Second Meeting: November 9, 2023

Third Meeting: November 14, 2024

IV. Programs Offered by our Township.

In general, Townships perform three mandatory functions: administering a general assistance program to qualified residents, maintaining township road highways and bridges, and appraising property values.

In addition to the mandatory functions, Vernon Township offers a number of programs and services. These include:

- Passport application processing
- Notary Services
- Medical Lending Closet
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Intake interviews
- Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) Intake interviews
- Social Agency Grants
- Discounted Taxi Coupons
- Senior Programming
- Youth Summer Camp
- Operation of a public Aquatic Center
- Swimming Lessons
- Athletic field rental
- Social events for the public
- Facility rental for public and private entities.
- Document Shredding Events
- Community Garage Sale
- Own and maintain three public parks and playground areas
- Own and operate the Prairie View Metra Station
- Own and operate two public, non-denominational cemeteries
- Serve as a location for early voting and election day voting
- Mosquito abatement for the unincorporated areas of the township
- Vernon Township Food pantry
- Annual "Adopt-a-family" holiday gift program
- Allocate annual "Ruth Bader Ginsburg Scholarship" award to area high school students
- Annual Thanksgiving basket program

A. Other services/programs we could possibly provide:

Work with the Lake County Clerk and any necessary state agency to allow Vernon Township to serve as an extension office to provide vital records such as Marriage, Death and Birth Certificates.

V. Social Service Agreements

A. We partner with the following not for profits to offer social services:

Entity:**Services Provided:**

1. Northern Illinois Food Bank - Purchase / Receive food for distribution by Food Pantry
2. Community Action Partners – Partner with Township for LIHEAP registration
3. Lake County / United Way – network with other providing agencies for the 211 system
4. Salvation Army / Goodwill – Supplemental assistance funding for EA/GA program.
5. A number community based organizations providing services to Vernon Township Residents

VI. Intergovernmental Agreements

A. We partner with, or have Intergovernmental Agreements, with the following other Governments:

<u>Entity</u>	<u>Services Offered</u>
Village of Vernon Hills	Snow Removal
Village of Lincolnshire	Snow Removal
Village of Indian Creek	Snow Removal/Road and R.O.W. maintenance
Village of Buffalo Grove	Snow Removal / Horatio Gardens Storm Sewer Project
Ela Township	Shared Equipment
Freemont Township	Shared Equipment
West Deerfield	Road and R.O.W maintenance
All County Townships/Road Districts	Mutual Aid

VII. 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.

☒ State laws applicable to Townships, including, but not limited to the Township Code (60 ILCS)

☒ Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)

☒ Policy on public comment

☐ Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))

☒ All of Elected Officials have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))

☒ Schedule of All Township Regular Meetings for Calendar or Fiscal Year (5 ILCS 120/2.03)

- ☒ Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)
- ☒ Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- ☒ FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- ☐ Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- ☒ Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))
- ☒ List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Township's Control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- ☐ Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))
- ☒ IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- ☒ Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1)
- ☒ All of our Elected Officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5)
- ☒ Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))
- ☒ Our Intergovernmental Agreements
- ☐ NA Our Social Service Agreements or Contracts
- ☒ Our budget and financial documents
- ☒ State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1)
- ☐ 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).
- ☐ Others (List Below or Attach):

VIII. What Have We Done Well?

Prior to the Highway consolidation, Vernon township has on numerous occasions lowered or froze its tax levy. Vernon Township has consistently planned for expected and unexpected improvements without the need to accrue debt to finance its operations.

Vernon Township has robust recreational opportunities for its residents including the operations of a community aquatic center that offers public swim, swimming lessons and the opportunity to rent the facility for private parties. These seasonal operations provide summer employment to about 50 young adults each year. Additionally, the Vernon Township park system has provided space for both active and passive recreational opportunities through its playgrounds, picnic shelters, athletic fields and walking paths. Vernon Township has also improved its natural areas with the removal of invasive species, plantings of native plants and completed a stream bank stabilization project to protect water quality in the Des Plaines River Watershed. Special programs created by staff have been popular, including movie night in the park and an ice cream social.

The services provided by the Vernon Township Food pantry are very well received by pantry visitors. The food pantry helps combat food insecurity for over 170 families, multiple times a month. Many donations (of both pantry items and money) are generously provided by the area units of government, private companies, foundations and the township residents. One major donor to the program is the Stevenson High School Give-a-thon which provides the food pantry with enough supplies to last up to 8 months. Programs such as the “Adopt-a-family” and Thanksgiving basket program provide opportunities for special meals and gifts to which some families may not otherwise have access. The food pantry was also very successful during the COVID pandemic in safely providing necessary food and personal items to those in need. The food pantry staff does a good job in coordinating support from local businesses. Fundraising any non-profit can be challenging. The food pantry and township staff have been creative in their efforts by hosting a community garage sale in which the proceeds are provided to the food pantry. Additionally, the ability of the public to use credit cards to donate have increased the regular revenues.

The Vernon Township Highway Department has done a great job of being punctual and thorough with the task of snow removal and the repair of damaged road and right of ways. The staff has a diverse skill set touching in a number of trades including automotive repair, electric, plumbing and machine operation to name a few. This has saved the Township a great deal of money by completing certain work and repairs in house instead of sending these tasks to a vendor.

Vernon Township consistently receives compliments from the public on all areas of township operations including work done on the roads and right of ways, the helpfulness of office staff, the condition and availability of its recreational areas and cemeteries, and the availability and affordability of the rental spaces.

IX. What Inefficiencies Did We Identify/What Are our Next Steps?

The cross training of staff would be an inefficiency that should be addressed. There have been occasions when a task is postponed because the responsible staff person is not available.

Additionally, the layout and design of the Township website seems inadequate. Steps are currently being taken to correct this issue.

X. What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?

One area to be more efficient would be to coordinate with local government agencies to provide and receive training for staff.

Additionally, staff and board members should look for educational opportunities available through various professional organizations such as the Metropolitan Township Association, Township Officials of Illinois and the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

The Township could look into the number of township wide mailings with an eye towards reducing this number, which will in turn provide for a cost savings for the Township. We should continue to identify new ways to communicate with the township residents specifically through electronic communications and social media outlets.

XI. Studies on Governmental Efficiencies

In preparing this report, the Township Officials of Illinois 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

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

To continue to improve its programs and services, the township should continue to seek public comment on these areas. This could include not only how to improve the current programs and services, but what services the area is lacking and can Vernon Township assist in filling this void.

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

Submitted by: PH Hirsh
Philip Hirsh, Chairperson
Decennial Efficiency Committee of Vernon Township

Date: