

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN PERSON AT WEST BRANCH CITY HALL, 121 N. FOURTH ST. ON MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M.

PLEASE NOTE: All guests and parties in attendance are asked to sign in if they will be making any comments during meetings, so that the City Clerk may properly record your name in the minutes. Public comments are limited to 3 minutes in length while matters from the floor are limited to 10 minutes. All in attendance are asked to silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Accommodations are available upon request to those who require alternately formatted materials or auxiliary aids to ensure effective communication and access to City meetings or hearings. All request for accommodations should be made with as much advance notice as possible, typically at least 10 business days in advance by contacting City Clerk Lori Ann Clover-Gambrel at (989) 345-0500. [DISCLAIMER: Views or opinions expressed by City Council Members or employees during meetings are those of the individuals speaking and do not represent the views or opinions of the City Council or the City as a whole.] [NOTICE: Audio and/or video may be recorded at public meetings of the City Council.]

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll call
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Scheduled Matters from the Floor
 - A. County Update
 - B. West Branch District Library Mileage – Sue Jennings
- V. Public hearing
- VI. Additions to the agenda
- VII. Public comment on agenda items only (limited to 3 minutes)
- VIII. Bids
- IX. Unfinished Business
 - A. Well Number 5 Repair
- X. New Business
 - A. Bills
 - B. Special Event Permit-Aktion Carnival
 - C. Alley Repair
 - D. Resolution 24-10 Budget Amendment
 - E. City of West Branch Training Plan
 - F. Foreclosed Property-First Right of Refusal
- XI. Approval of the minutes and summary from the regular meeting held April 1, 2024 and the work session held April 10, 2024
- XII. Consent Agenda
 - A. Treasurer's Report and Investment Summary
 - B. WB PD March 2024 Report
 - C. BOR Minutes from the March 2024 session
 - D. Planning Commission minutes from March 12, 2024
 - E. Election Commission minutes from April 12, 2024

- XIII. Communications
 - A. Charter-Franchise Renewal
 - B. Fiscal Health of Michigan Local Governments 2021/2022
- XIV. Reports
 - A. Mayor
 - B. Council
 - C. Manager
 - D. Attn: Meihn
- XV. Public comment any topic
- XVI. Adjournment

UPCOMING MEETINGS-EVENTS

April 16	Music in the Park	4:00
April 17	Public Accuracy Testing	10:45
April 17	Land Bank	11:00
April 17	Airport Board	12:15
April 18	Housing Commission	12:00
April 23	DDA	12:00
May 6	City Council	6:00
May 7	Special Election	
May 14	Planning Commission	6:00
May 15	Airport Board	12:15
May 16	Housing Commission	12:00
May 20	City Council	6:00
May 27	City Hall Closed	
May 28	DDA	12:00
May 28	MTA (Klacking Twp)	6:00

Next Meeting-May 6, 2024



6837 W. Grand River Ave.
Lansing, MI 48906

City of West Branch
Attn: Mike Killackey
121 North 4th Street
West Branch, MI 48661

Proposal

Date	Proposal #
3/19/2024	24-Q3082

Description	Qty	Rate	Total
<p>Thank you for the opportunity to present you with this proposal for a new VFD for well 5.</p> <p>Scope of project: Replace existing 40hp vfd with new vfd includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Remove existing E-Flex VFD- Use existing short circuit protection- Install a free standing ATV630D37N4 50HP 480v VFD- Mount new DV/DT output filter under VFD- Install new Hand/Off/Auto control buttons next to drive- Use existing control wiring- Program and test all operation <p>* Currently, drive is in stock, and filter is in stock t factory *</p> <p>This Quote is good for 45 days. Pricing subject to change based on current market environment.</p> <p>NOTE: Should conditions change and/or any additional work be required, beyond the original scope of this project, our standard hourly rates will apply. Northern Pump & Well will consult with you prior to the additional work being performed.</p> <p>Signature: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Purchase Order No. (if required): _____ * If this proposal meets your approval, please sign / date and return to fax number...1-517-322-0135</p>	1	11,783.45	11,783.45
If you have any questions, feel free to call 877-477-1757 or 517-322-0219		Total	\$11,783.45

*ATTACHED IS A
LIST OF THE
BILLS TO BE APPROVED
AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING*

<i>BILLS AS OF 4/12/24</i>	<i>\$115,002.69</i>
<i>Additions to Bills as of</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<i>Paid but not approved</i>	<i>\$510.92</i>
TOTAL BILLS	\$115,513.61

**BILLS ARE AVAILABLE
AT THE MEETING
FOR COUNCIL'S REVIEW**

Vendor Name	Amount	Description
ACME SPORTS INC	229.30	POLICE AMMO
AKTPEERLESS	2,450.00	508 E HOUGHTON AVE PROJECT
BBC DISTRIBUTING	72.29	WWTP SUPPLIES
BECKETT & RAEDER	2,310.00	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY
CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS	819.85	PHONES & INTERNET
CINTAS	387.78	UNIFORMS
CITY OF WEST BRANCH	206.16	WATER BILLS MARCH
CLOVER, LORI ANN	100.50	MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT
COLUMN SOFTWARE PBC	172.93	ADS
CONSUMERS ENERGY	25.72	ELECTRIC
CONSUMERS ENERGY	10,988.21	ELECTRIC
ELECTION SOURCE	296.99	ELECTION SUPPLIES
FLEIS & VANDENBRINK	65,986.74	DWSRF 2024 WATER SYSTEM IMP
FOSTER BLUE WATER OIL LLC	2,379.95	FUEL
GFL ENVIRONMENTAL	12,791.33	GARBAGE SERVICE APRIL & RECYCLING
GRAINGER	10.98	WWTP SHIPPING
HOME DEPOT	536.76	VARIOUS SUPPLIES
HUTSON INC	153.73	VARIOUS PARTS
LEXISNEXIS	4,690.00	POLICE NEW TICKET PROGRAM
MICHIGAN AMMO LLC	600.00	POLICE AMMO
MILLER OFFICE MACHINES	689.16	POLICE COPIER
NORTH CENTRAL LABORATORIES	885.38	WWTP SUPPLIES
OFFICE CENTRAL	436.95	VARIOUS SUPPLIES
OGEMAW COUNTY EMERGENCY DISPATCH AU	25.00	WARRANT ENTRY
ON DUTY GEAR LLC	377.96	POLICE UNIFORMS
SAVE A LOT	137.03	VARIOUS SUPPLIES
SCHMITT TIRE & GAS	102.00	REPAIRS
SELLEY'S CLEANERS	38.50	POLICE DRY CLEANING
STATE OF MICHIGAN	322.00	WATER SAMPLES
TRITERRA, LLC	95.00	508 E HOUGHTON AVE PROJECT
UPS	23.23	WWTP SHIPPING
VISA	5,940.97	VARIOUS CHARGES
WASTE MANAGEMENT INC	307.86	WWTP DUMPSTERS
WEST BRANCH ACE HARDWARE	412.43	VARIOUS SUPPLIES
TOTAL		115,002.69



City of West Branch

121 N 4th St, West Branch, Michigan 48661
(989)345-0500 • Fax (989)345-4390 • www.westbranch.com

Special Event Permit

Event Name: Denny Shumway
Event Date: 8/3/2024 Start Time: 8 AM End Time: 5 PM
Name of Sponsoring Organization: Aktion Club of West Branch
Address: 385 W M 55 WEST BRANCH MI 48661
Contact Person: Denny Phone Number: 315 725 1199
Describe the purpose of this event: Carnival

Point of Assembly and/or proposed route (attach separate diagram if needed):

If requesting a road closure Road closure Start time: _____ End time: _____

Road closure location _____

In an effort to help your event run smoothly you must make sure the following departments are aware of and/or can staff your event. **Please obtain signatures from each department listed advising us that they are aware:**

West Branch City Police - services NOT needed ☒ arrangements have been made ☐

[Signature]
Chief of Police

Ogemaw County Posse - services NOT needed ☒ arrangements have been made ☐

[Signature]
Chief of Police

West Branch City DPW - services NOT needed ☐ arrangement have been made ☐

[Signature]
DPW Superintendent



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Additional Terms and Conditions:

1. Sponsoring Organization agrees that it will fully comply with the terms of this permit and will also comply with all State, County, and Local ordinances that may pertain to the event.
2. Sponsoring Organization further agrees and understands that it shall hold harmless and indemnify the City, its officers, employees, contractors, subcontractors, representatives, and agents from and against any and all civil actions, claims, judgements, injuries and/or damages including attorney fees resulting and/or arising from the special event and/or from the actions and/or omissions of the special event.
3. Sponsoring Organization further agrees and understands that it shall hold harmless and indemnify the City, its officers, employees, contractors, subcontractors, representatives, and agents from and against any and all civil actions, claims, judgements, injuries and/or damages including attorney fees resulting and/or arising from the special event and/or from the actions and/or omissions from third parties hired or are volunteers of Sponsoring Organization.

Sponsor Organization signs this Agreement after having fully reviewed the terms and conditions set forth above and agree to be responsible for full compliance of such terms and conditions.

Denny Shumway
Applicant Signature

4/10/2024
Date

For Office Use Only:

Permit Approved – Yes / No

Council meeting date _____

Manager / Clerk Signature

Press down to select and
left click to finish



RESOLUTION #24-10

WHEREAS, City staff compares the year to date actual with the budgeted amount of all revenue and expenditures monthly; and

WHEREAS, the revenues in Fund 101, General Fund, were increased due to the addition of the State of Michigan grant for the police officer cadet schooling, and

WHEREAS, the expenses in Fund 101, General Fund, were increased due to an increase in the contractual services for the police officer cade schooling cost, the cost for the mobile ticket printer system, and the consulting cost for the development of the City marketing strategy as part of the requirements for the Redevelopment Ready Community certification that was originally budgeted for in a prior fiscal year, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the West Branch City Council hereby adopts the following budget amendments:

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2023-24 CURRENT BUDGET	2023-24 AMENDED BUDGET

Fund 101 - GENERAL FUND			
Revenues			
Dept 000.000			
Total Dept 000.000		1,894,332.00	1,894,332.00
Dept 262.000 - ELECTIONS			
Total Dept 262.000 - ELECTIONS		5,500.00	5,500.00
Dept 301.000 - POLICE DEPARTMENT			
101-301.000-478.000	MARIJUANA PERMITS	10,000.00	10,000.00
101-301.000-528.000	OTHER FEDERAL GRANTS	41,667.00	41,667.00
101-301.000-572.401	IN-SERVICE TRAINING	500.00	500.00
101-301.000-634.401	GRANT	0.00	0.00
101-301.000-634.402	GRANT - STATE OF MI	0.00	48,000.00
101-301.000-640.400	K-9 REVENUE	500.00	500.00
101-301.000-654.400	TRAFFIC BUREAU	12,000.00	12,000.00
101-301.000-655.400	ACCIDENT REPORTS	350.00	350.00
101-301.000-656.400	DISTRICT COURT FINES	1,500.00	1,500.00
101-301.000-674.000	CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONATIONS	0.00	0.00
101-301.000-692.400	MISCELLANEOUS	0.00	0.00
101-301.000-695.415	OTHER GOV'T UNITS	75,000.00	75,000.00
Total Dept 301.000 - POLICE DEPARTMENT		141,517.00	189,517.00
Dept 400.000 - BOND REVENUE			

Total Dept 400.000 - BOND REVENUE	0.00	0.00
Dept 441.000 - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT		
Total Dept 441.000 - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT	33,000.00	33,000.00
Dept 528.000 - SOLID WASTE		
Total Dept 528.000 - SOLID WASTE	12,000.00	12,000.00
Dept 701.000 - PLANNING AND ZONING		
Total Dept 701.000 - PLANNING AND ZONING	750.00	750.00
Dept 751.000 - PARKS AND RECREATION		
Total Dept 751.000 - PARKS AND RECREATION	1,000.00	1,000.00
TOTAL REVENUES	2,088,099.00	2,136,099.00
Expenditures		
Dept 101.000 - LEGISLATIVE		
Total Dept 101.000 - LEGISLATIVE	18,859.00	18,859.00
Dept 172.000 - CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE		
Total Dept 172.000 - CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE	140,433.00	140,433.00
Dept 209.000 - PROPERTY ASSESSMENT REVIEW		
Total Dept 209.000 - PROPERTY ASSESSMENT REVIEW	13,763.00	13,763.00
Dept 215.000 - CITY CLERK		
Total Dept 215.000 - CITY CLERK	75,989.00	75,989.00
Dept 228.000 - TECHNOLOGY		
Total Dept 228.000 - TECHNOLOGY	14,275.00	14,275.00
Dept 253.000 - CITY TREASURER		
Total Dept 253.000 - CITY TREASURER	118,046.00	118,046.00
Dept 261.000 - INTERNAL SERVICES		
Total Dept 261.000 - INTERNAL SERVICES	47,211.00	47,211.00
Dept 262.000 - ELECTIONS		
Total Dept 262.000 - ELECTIONS	8,501.00	8,501.00
Dept 265.000 - MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES		
Total Dept 265.000 - MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES	273,199.00	273,199.00

Dept 266.000 - LEGAL ASSISTANCE			
Total Dept 266.000 - LEGAL ASSISTANCE		47,300.00	47,300.00
Dept 267.000 - COMMUNITY PROMOTIONS			
Total Dept 267.000 - COMMUNITY PROMOTIONS		12,303.00	12,303.00
Dept 268.000 - CITY SERVICES			
Total Dept 268.000 - CITY SERVICES		53,995.00	53,995.00
Dept 271.000 - INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT			
Total Dept 271.000 - INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT		16,426.00	16,426.00
Dept 301.000 - POLICE DEPARTMENT			
101-301.000-702.700	PROMOTION/BONUS	350.00	350.00
101-301.000-703.700	SALARIES AND WAGES	328,440.00	328,440.00
101-301.000-705.700	CHIEF OF POLICE	73,078.00	73,078.00
101-301.000-708.700	SICK LEAVE PAYOUT	450.00	450.00
101-301.000-710.700	OVERTIME	12,000.00	12,000.00
101-301.000-713.700	EMP. HEALTH OPTION	2,550.00	2,550.00
101-301.000-714.700	MANDATORY MEDICARE	6,037.00	6,037.00
101-301.000-715.700	SOCIAL SECURITY (EMPLOYER)	25,638.00	25,638.00
101-301.000-716.700	HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM	60,480.00	60,480.00
101-301.000-717.700	LIFE INSURANCE PREMIUM	1,305.00	1,305.00
101-301.000-718.700	MERS RETIREMENT (EMPLOYER)	91,486.00	91,486.00
101-301.000-718.701	EMPLOYER DEFERED COMP.	8,450.00	8,450.00
101-301.000-719.700	LONG TERM DISABILITY	3,864.00	3,864.00
101-301.000-720.700	WORKERS COMPENSATION PREMIUM	10,010.00	10,010.00
101-301.000-724.700	UNEMPLOYMENT INS. BENEFIT	50.00	50.00
101-301.000-727.700	OPERATING SUPPLIES	5,000.00	9,000.00
101-301.000-801.700	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	3,000.00	20,000.00
101-301.000-811.700	MEMBERSHIP AND DUES	2,100.00	2,100.00
101-301.000-817.700	UNIFORMS	6,000.00	6,000.00
101-301.000-853.700	TELEPHONE/RADIO COMMUNICATION	5,000.00	5,000.00
101-301.000-941.700	EQUIPMENT RENTAL	10,000.00	10,000.00
101-301.000-955.700	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	0.00	0.00
101-301.000-955.701	DATA PROCESSING	6,410.00	6,410.00
101-301.000-956.700	EXPENSES	2,590.00	2,590.00
101-301.000-956.702	YOUTH SAFETY EXPENSE	2,000.00	2,000.00
101-301.000-956.703	K-9 EXPENSES	500.00	500.00
101-301.000-956.707	FORFEITURE EXPENSE	50.00	50.00
101-301.000-957.700	EDUCATION AND TRAINING LOCAL	6,000.00	6,000.00
101-301.000-957.701	EDUCATION 302	500.00	500.00

101-301.000-968.700	STING	4,000.00	4,000.00
101-301.000-977.700	CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS	7,405.00	7,405.00
Total Dept 301.000 - POLICE DEPARTMENT		684,743.00	701,743.00
Dept 315.000 - CROSSING GUARDS			
Total Dept 315.000 - CROSSING GUARDS		8,357.00	8,357.00
Dept 336.000 - FIRE			
Total Dept 336.000 - FIRE		28,165.00	28,165.00
Dept 441.000 - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT			
Total Dept 441.000 - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT		143,112.00	143,112.00
Dept 528.000 - SOLID WASTE			
Total Dept 528.000 - SOLID WASTE		219,292.00	219,292.00
Dept 595.000 - AIRPORT			
Total Dept 595.000 - AIRPORT		54,358.00	54,358.00
Dept 701.000 - PLANNING AND ZONING			
Total Dept 701.000 - PLANNING AND ZONING		9,775.00	9,775.00
Dept 728.000 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
101-728.000-801.700	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	0.00	5,000.00
101-728.000-945.700	EDC DUES	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total Dept 728.000 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		1,000.00	6,000.00
Dept 729.000 - CODE ENFORCEMENT			
Total Dept 729.000 - CODE ENFORCEMENT		0.00	0.00
Dept 751.000 - PARKS AND RECREATION			
Total Dept 751.000 - PARKS AND RECREATION		74,766.00	74,766.00
Dept 965.000 - TRANSFERS			
Total Dept 965.000 - TRANSFERS		20,000.00	20,000.00
Dept 965.204 - TRANS TO OTHER ACCOUNTS 204			
Total Dept 965.204 - TRANS TO OTHER ACCOUNTS 204		0.00	0.00
Dept 965.209 - TRANSFER TO CEMETERY			
Total Dept 965.209 - TRANSFER TO CEMETERY		20,310.00	20,310.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES	2,104,178.00	2,126,178.00

Fund 101 - GENERAL FUND:		
TOTAL REVENUES	2,088,099.00	2,136,099.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	2,104,178.00	2,130,178.00
NET OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES	(16,079.00)	5,921.00
CARRYOVER	559,614.00	565,535.00



Training Plan

Draft February 2024



Introduction

Serving on one of the City's elected or appointed commissions provides opportunities for West Branch residents to serve their community and help maintain the City's high quality of life. Commissioners are routinely asked to discuss and make decisions on a wide variety of topics and plans to help guide the future development in the city. Recognizing this, the City of West Branch has developed this training guide to help provide meaningful and relevant training opportunities for its commissioners. This guide was developed based on recommendations and current best practices.

Goals and Expectations

It is the goal of the City of West Branch to promote and encourage the continuing education of all its Board members. By doing so, it will help make each member more knowledgeable about the role they serve and be better prepared to carry out the City's goals & objectives. The city believes this continued training is essential in giving Board Members the tools and knowledge to better carry out their duties. To help Board Members meet this goal, the following expectations are put into place.

- Each City Council member and appointed and elected officials complete two hours of training per fiscal year.
- At least one training activity a Board Member undertakes should be related to one of the Priority Training Areas listed in this plan.

To help facilitate this, the city staff will inform board members of available training opportunities that it is aware of. At minimum, a list of general training resources will be provided to all board and commissions. As other potential training opportunities are made aware to the city, this information will be passed along to board members as relevant. City staff shall be responsible for tracking attendance for all training sessions and activities hosted or organized by the City. For all other activities, each board member shall be responsible for notifying the City on any training activities they complete.



Methods of Training

The city recognizes that as technology has evolved and acceptable training methods have transformed, a wider variety of opportunities to expand one's knowledge has emerged. Today, the opportunity to get valuable training and experience has expanded beyond traditional means. As such, the city encourages board and commissioners to be proactive in seeking out ways to improve their knowledge, skillset, and experience for the positions they hold.

The following is a list of training examples that can be used under this plan. This list is not meant to be exclusive, as the city recognizes that appropriate and relevant training can be offered in a wide variety of forms. Therefore, council members are encouraged to discuss other training options not listed above with City Staff to determine its suitability for this policy.

- Webinars
- Conferences
- Other in-person meeting, facilitated session, walking tour, or similar function
- Participation in a City organized study session or work session on various planning-related topics. These will often be held as preparation or an introduction for other City initiatives or zoning amendments that are being considered.
- Podcasts on a relevant topic to the Commissioner's position
- Reading a book or published article on a relevant topic
- Mentorship with a professional in a field relevant to the board members position (This option should be discussed in advance with the City to make sure there are no professional conflicts of interest.)

Priority Training Areas

Based on conversations with board and commissions and city staff, the following topics are considered priorities for additional Board Member training.

- Master Plan
- Pedestrian/Non-Motorized Traffic
- Placemaking
- Downtown Development/TIF Plan



- Housing

Resources

Below is a list of potential resources for training opportunities by the Board. Each commission is encouraged to find a training course that fits their needs, and report back to staff once a training has been completed.

City council

Responsibilities: [List out duties and responsibilities here]

Municipal Budget

Zoning Ordinance

Code of Ordinance

Master Plan

Home Rule City Act (1909 PA 279)

Open Meetings Act (1976 PA 196)

Freedom of Information Act (1975 PA 442)

Michigan Planning Enabling Act (2008 PA 33)

Parliamentary Procedure (Roberts Rules of Order)

Training Resources:

- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) - check out available trainings via the events webpage. <https://www.miplace.org/events/>
- Michigan Economic Developers Association (MEDA) - With over 500 members, MEDA exists to advance economic development throughout Michigan, and increase the individual member's effectiveness in the economic development profession. The association's goal is to provide a variety of services and programs that will enhance ability and skills in economic development. The

City of West Branch Training Plan



group sponsors in-person training, an annual meeting/conference, and advocacy events. Their website also contains general information on economic development. While MEDA is a membership organization, non-members are welcome to attend most events. Check out their website here:

<https://www.medaweb.org/>

- Michigan Municipal League (MML) – checkout available trainings via their webpage: <https://mml.org/education-events/on-site-training-programs/>

Planning Commission

Responsibilities: [List out duties and responsibilities here]

Capital Improvement Plan

Zoning Ordinance

Master Plan

Site Plan Review

Special Use Review

Michigan Planning Enabling Act (2008 PA 33)

Parliamentary Procedure (Roberts Rules of Order)

Training Resources:

- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) – check out available trainings via the events webpage. <https://www.miplace.org/events/>
- MSU extension Citizen Planner Program: Citizen Planner Program offers land use education for locally appointed and elected planning officials and interested residents throughout Michigan. This non-credit course leads to a certificate of completion awarded by MSU Extension. https://www.canr.msu.edu/michigan_citizen_planner/



City of West Branch Training Plan

- Michigan Association of Planning: MAP training is available to your community year-round through our on-site workshop program. At an on-site workshop an instructor comes to your location, at a time and date convenient for your participants, and presents a comprehensive educational program, addressing the specific needs of your community. <https://www.planningmi.org/on-site-workshops>

Downtown Development Authority

Responsibilities: [List out duties and responsibilities here]

DDA District

Michigan Main Street Program

DDA Master Plan

TIF Plan

Economic Vitality

Organization

Promotions

Design

Training Resources:

- Michigan Downtown Association: Founded in 1980, the Michigan Downtown Association (MDA) is a state-wide, non-profit organization and a driving force in the interest and growth of downtowns and communities throughout Michigan. The MDA encourages the development, redevelopment and continuing improvement of Michigan communities and downtowns. <https://www.michigandowntowns.com/resources.php>

Funding



All board and commission members shall be reimbursed for the cost of approved training and other reasonable expenses (travel, food, lodging, etc.) related to approved training. This funding shall be provided as part of the City's annual budget. In addition to direct funding by the city, several Michigan organizations offer scholarships to help with the cost of training. These include:

- Michigan Association of Planning - Scholarship Training Opportunities:
 - <https://www.planningmi.org/scholarships>
- Michigan Municipal League - Tim Doyle Scholarship Fund: The Tim Doyle Scholarship Fund helps provide access to the most critical information for newly elected officials through the Elected Officials Academy (EOA) Core Weekender seminar. There they can learn about financial management, leadership skills, legal issues and planning and zoning.
<https://mmlfoundation.org/tim-doyle-scholarship-fund/>

Reporting

As the variety of available training opportunities is vast, it is important that each board member shares the knowledge that he or she gains from these sessions. To help facilitate this, all board members shall present a summary of any session, course, or approved activity that they completed, including what was learned and how it might be applicable to the City in the future. Time for this sharing shall be done as follows.

- For City Council Members, this shall be done during the Report of council members agenda item at the first meeting after the activity.
- For all other boards, a separate agenda item will be added at the next meeting following the training session to allow commissioners to give their report. Board members shall coordinate these activities with City Staff or board liaison to ensure meeting time is allotted for this report.

Annual Plan Review

To ensure the City stays on top of current trends and training best practices, City staff will review this plan every year and update it as necessary.

CAREN PIGLOWSKI
OGEMAW COUNTY TREASURER
806 W. Houghton Ave. Rm#103
West Branch, MI 48661
989-345-0084

04/04/2024

Dear County, City, Village, Township:

PLEASE DO NOT CIRCULATE

Enclosed please find a list of the parcels that were foreclosed by Ogemaw County. This list is not final as there could be further discovery of an issue that would force us to withhold the parcel from auction. The minimum price list is attached.

The property tax act, PA 123, established a procedure for the State and local municipalities to purchase foreclosed property prior to the public tax sale auction. The law establishes the following order of preference:

1. The State of Michigan has first right of refusal and must pay the higher of the minimum bid or the fair market value of the property.
2. The City, Village or Township (in that order) in which the property is located can purchase the property if the State declines and must pay the minimum bid amount if no claimant has filed a claim for remaining sale proceeds.
3. The County may purchase the property if the State, City, Village or Township declines and must pay the minimum bid amount if no claimant has filed a claim for remaining sale proceeds.
4. The County Authority (Land Bank) may purchase the property if the State, City, Village, Township or County declines and must pay the minimum bid amount if no claimant has filed a claim for remaining sale proceeds.

YOUR OPTION MUST BE EXERCISED BY JULY 1, 2024.

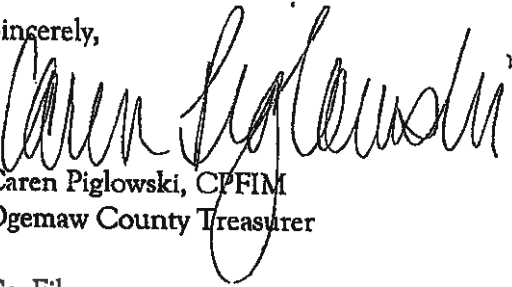
The list has been sent to the State and we are not aware if they will exercise their option on any parcel. *If your municipality has an interest in a parcel, please communicate that information to the County Treasurer's Office as soon as possible.* If we find out that the State does not wish to acquire the parcel you are interested in, the municipality will need to pass a resolution to exercise the right of first refusal. This form is attached.

Please be advised: THE ATTACHED LIST IS NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AT THIS TIME. Any parcel not purchased by the State or municipality will increase the minimum bid price due to the cost of the auction and any other miscellaneous items.

If your municipality DOES NOT have an interest, please complete the "Waiver of First Right of Refusal" and return to the County Treasurer's Office no later than July 1, 2024. This form is attached.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



Caren Piglowski, CPFIM
Ogemaw County Treasurer

Cc: File

NOTICE OF INTENT TO EXERCISE RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL

DATE _____

TO: OGEMAW COUNTY TREASURER
806 W. HOUGHTON AVE., RM #103
WEST BRANCH, MI 48661

The municipality noted below is interested in purchasing the following foreclosed
parcels:

SIGNED:

CLERK OF

Please attach Board Resolution

WAIVER OF FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL

DATE: _____

TO: OGEMAW COUNTY TREASURER

SUBJECT: FORECLOSED PROPERTY
PER ACT 123, P.A. 1999

In accordance with Public Act 123, the Township/City/Village/County has the right of refusal to acquire tax-foreclosed parcels. At this time, we are waiving our right to all parcels that were foreclosed on April 04, 2024.

Clerk of _____
Township/City/Village/County

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET ON MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024.

Mayor Frechette called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: City Mayor Paul Frechette, Council Members Joanne Bennett, Mike Jackson, Ellen Pugh, Rusty Showalter, and Cathy Zimmerman.

Absent: Member Carol Adair

Other officers present: City Manager John Dantzer, City Clerk Lori Ann Clover-Gambrel, Chief Ken Walters, and City Attn: Gregory Meihn via Zoom.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

* * * * *

Ray Stover gave an update on the MyMichigan expansion. They will be bringing in more physicians to the area, both primary care and specialists. They are looking at a July/August time frame to have things finalized. The OB department here is in its third year. They just hired one OB doctor and are actively recruiting for one more. A new primary care physician will be starting in August. The West Branch Campus received an "A" rating for quality and safety through "Leap Frog". They will be having 24/7 security coverage for those patients that are more aggressive. The Seaton Cancer Institute will also be a part of the expansion.

* * * * *

Barry Wilson and Lois Bergquist spoke to Council concerning the fence on the side of the Historical Museum. People parking in the parking lot are hitting the fence and it is broken in several places. Council decided that it would be best to tear down the fence look into barriers to keep people from driving into the yard.

* * * * *

Mayor Frechette opened the public hearing for the OPRA District at 111 N. Third Street at 6:20 pm.

Manager Dantzer and Ryan Smith from Alexander Limited Partnership spoke to council about the next steps of creating the OPRA District. Council approved the creation previously and now they are ready to proceed. Alexander Limited Partnerships has submitted the State tax approval certificate. They qualify for the next twelve years. The City must send the signed application and resolution to the State. No one else from the public wished to speak on the subject and no communication was received by City Hall prior to the meeting.

* * * * *

MOTION BY FRECHETTE, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:24 PM.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY ZIMMERMAN, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 24-09 OPRA APPLICATION FOR ALEXANDER LIMITED PARTNERSHIP AT 111 N THIRD ST. AND AUTHORIZE CLERK CLOVER-GAMBREL TO SIGN ON THE CITY'S BEHALF.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

Resolution 24-09 Approving Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Exemption Certificate Application for Alexander Limited Partnership, Located at 111 N. Third St.

WHEREAS, pursuant to PA 146 of 2000, the City of West Branch is a Qualified Local Governmental Unit eligible to establish one or more Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Districts; and

WHEREAS, the City of West Branch legally established the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District #1 on February 20, 2023, after a public hearing held on February 20, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the taxable value of the property proposed to be exempt plus the aggregate taxable value of property already exempt under Public Act 146 of 2000 and under Public Act 198 of 1974 (IFT's) does not exceed 5% of the total taxable value of the City of West Branch; and

WHEREAS, the application was approved at a public hearing as provided by section 4(2) of Public Act 146 of 2000 on April 1, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Alexander Limited Partnership is not delinquent in any taxes related to the facility; and

WHEREAS, the application is for obsolete property as defined in section 2(h) of Public Act 146 of 2000; and

WHEREAS, the applicant Alexander Limited Partnership has provided answers to all required questions under the application instructions to the City of West Branch; and

WHEREAS, the City of West Branch requires that rehabilitation of the facility shall be completed by December 31, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the commencement of the rehabilitation of the facility did not occur before the establishment of the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District; and

WHEREAS, the application relates to a rehabilitation program that when completed constitutes a rehabilitated facility within the meaning of Public Act 146 of 2000 and that is situated within an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District established in the City of West Branch eligible under Public Act 146 of 2000 to establish such a district; and

meeting and is willing to add running the speaker line through the conduit for our light poles for \$20,000.00. The DDA will be paying for this with their streetscape funds.

MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY SHOWALTER TO AWARD THE BID AND SOLE SOURCE VENDOR REQUEST FOR THE DOWNTOWN SPEAKER SYSTEM TO THIRD COAST TECH NOT TO EXCEED \$14,979.83 AND AUTHORIZE MANAGER DANTZER TO SIGN ON THE CITY'S BEHALF.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$146,019.74.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY FRECHETTE, SECOND BY BENNETT, TO EXCUSE MEMBER ADAIR FROM TODAY'S MEETING.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY FRECHETTE, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO POSTPONE ANY DECISION ON WELL #5 REGARDING THE VFD MOTOR IN WELL NUMBER FIVE UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

Manager Dantzer explained that because we are adding lights for the entire length of the project Consumers will not be putting their street lights back up right next to ours. This will eliminate all of the poles on the side of the road and be more aesthetically pleasing.

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY PUGH, TO APPROVE THE CONSUMERS CHANGE IN STANDARD LIGHTING CONTRACT AND AUTHORIZE CLERK CLOVER-GAMBREL TO SIGN ON THE CITY'S BEHALF.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

Council Member Joanne Bennett put in her resignation effective following this meeting. She will be moving out of town. Manager Dantzer explained that Member Bennett's seat is up for re-election this year so there will only be a short-term appointment if Council wants to proceed in that direction. Lois Bergquist has expressed interest and is very knowledgeable of the activities of the City and also sits on the Recreation Committee.

MOTION BY PUGH, SECOND BY FRECHETTE, TO REGRETABLELY, DECLARE THE COUNCIL SEAT HELD BY JOANNE BENNETT AS VACANT.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY ZIMMERMAN, SECOND BY PUGH, TO APPOINT LOIS BERGQUIST INTO THE COUNCIL SEAT VACATED BY JOANNE BENNETT.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

Council set a work session on April 10, 2024 at 6:00 pm to work on the 2024/2025 budget.

* * * * *

MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND SUMMARY FROM THE REGULAR MEETING AND CLOSED SESSION HELD MARCH 18, 2024.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY BENNETT, TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE TREASURER'S REPORT AND INVESTMENT SUMMARY; MINUTES FROM THE AIRPORT BOARD MEETINGS HELD JANUARY 17, 2024 AND FEBRUARY 21, 2024; MINUTES FROM THE DDA MEETINGS HELD JANUARY 23, 2024, FEBRUARY 28, 2024 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 5, 2024;

MINUTES FROM THE OGEMAW COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 21, 2024; AND MINUTES FROM THE WWTPA MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 13, 2024.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Adair

Motion carried

* * * * *

Mayor Frechette informed council that the commissioners meeting would be held Tuesday April 9th not Thursday next week. Mayor Frechette also thanked Lois Bergquist for being willing to take the appointment to City Council.

Member Showalter thanked Member Bennett for her service. Others echoed this sentiment.

Attn. Meihn stated he was sorry to see Member Bennett resign.

Chief Walters informed Council that he has been successful in acquiring \$64,518.09 in grants to cover the cost of training the new officers. He also has a couple of grants in the works that have not been awarded yet.

Mayor Frechette adjourned the meeting at 6:57 pm.

Paul Frechette, Mayor

Lori Ann Clover-Gambrel, Clerk

SUMMARY OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET ON MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024.

Mayor Frechette called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Frechette, Council Members Bennett, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, and Zimmerman.

Absent: Council Member Adair

Other officers present: Manager Dantzer, Clerk Clover-Gambrel, Chief Walters, and City Attn: Meihn via Zoom.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ray Stover gave an update on the MyMichigan expansion.

Council agreed to tear down the fence by the Historical Museum.

Mayor Frechette opened the public hearing for the OPRA District at 111 N. Third St. at 6:20 pm.

Council closed the Public Hearing at 6:24 pm.

Council approved Resolution 24-09 OPRA Application for Alexander Limited Partnership and authorized Clerk Clover-Gambrel to sign on the City's behalf.

Council awarded the bid from Robert T. Cole Inc. for the Water Treatment Plant.

Council awarded the sole source bid for the Master Plan update to NEMCOG.

Council awarded the sole source bid for the downtown speaker system to Third Coast Tech.

Council approved bills in the amount of \$146,019.74.

Council excused Member Adair from the meeting.

Council postponed the decision on Well Number 5.

Council approved the Standard Lighting Contract and authorized Clerk Clover-Gambrel to sign on the City's behalf.

Council regrettably declared the seat held by Member Bennett as vacant.

Council appointed Lois Bergquist to the vacant Council Seat.

Council approved the minutes and summary from the regular meeting and closed session held March 18, 2024.

Council received and filed the treasurers report and investment summary; minutes from the airport board meetings held 1/17/24 and 2/21/24; minutes from the DDA meetings held 1/23/24, 2/28/24, and the special meeting held 2/5/24; minutes from the Ogemaw county land Bank Authority meeting held 2/21/24; and minutes from the WWTPA meeting held 2/13/24.

Mayor Frechette, Member Showalter, Attn. Meihn, and Chief Walters gave updates

Mayor Frechette adjourned the meeting at 6:57 pm.

WORK SESSION OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD AT THE WEST BRANCH CITY HALL, 121 N. FOURTH ST. ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

Mayor Frechette called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: City Mayor Paul Frechette, Council Members Carol Adair, Lois Bergquist, Mike Jackson, Ellen Pugh, Rusty Showalter, and Cathy Zimmerman.

Absent: None

Other officers present: City Manager John Dantzer, City Clerk Lori Ann Clover-Gambrel, and DPW Supervisor Mike Killackey.

Manager Dantzer went through the 2024/2025 proposed budget highlighting a few of the changes from the previous year. Manager Dantzer did review and compare salaries from the MML salary survey. Increases in expenses were allowances for the Sesquicentennial Celebration, the purchase or rebuild of the VAT Truck, and the purchase of a Tool Cat. There was a considerable increase in the Airport Budget contribution also. With the net from the Major Street Fund, Council would like to see the sidewalk from Ace to Walker Insurance constructed. Manager Dantzer will get a quote on both asphalt and concrete. Local Street included the pavement striping for the lights at the railroad crossing. Manager Dantzer also reviewed the grants awarded to the city and the increase in interest. Council gave Manager Dantzer accolades for all the grant money he has procured for the City. The Fairview Street bond is almost final and the Plant and Streetscape bond are just beginning.

Work Session ended at 8:04 pm.

Bank Code		Beginning Balance 04/01/2024	Total Debits	Total Credits	Ending Balance 04/30/2024
Fund	Description				
GEN1	GEN1 - GENERAL CHECKING				
101	GENERAL FUND	889,891.25	90,709.73	54,136.11	926,464.87
151	CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE	41,981.83	40,000.00	80,000.00	1,981.83
209	CEMETERY FUND	100.65	0.00	961.76	(861.11)
237	MARIJUANA FUND	4,549.58	0.00	0.00	4,549.58
243	BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FU	3,047.65	0.00	0.00	3,047.65
248	DDA OPERATING FUND	391,146.14	1,792.21	200.00	392,738.35
251	INDUSTRIAL PARK FUND	39,533.78	0.00	83.33	39,450.45
276	HOUSING RESOURCE FUND	198,413.23	758.00	0.00	199,171.23
318	SEWER DEBT FUND	219,565.73	11,152.55	294.73	230,423.55
319	WATER DEBT FUND	130,851.43	2,334.22	61.21	133,124.44
372	PLANT REPLACEMENT FUND (R&I)	1.84	0.00	0.00	1.84
390	SEWER FUND	355,964.25	16,169.07	20,298.24	351,835.08
391	WATER FUND	671,772.06	19,792.76	49,919.73	641,645.09
392	WATER REPLACEMENT FUND	2,545,005.51	65,986.74	30,132.65	2,580,859.60
397	SEWER COLLECTION	301,119.62	2,816.40	3,060.92	300,875.10
361	EQUIPMENT FUND	157,490.16	8,869.16	3,017.55	163,341.77
704	PAYROLL CLEARING	(19,448.19)	43,945.03	0.00	24,496.84
705	IRONS PARK ENTERTAINMENT FUND	15,728.17	825.00	750.00	15,803.17
707	YOUTH SAFETY PROGRAM	115.98	0.00	0.00	115.98
	GEN1 - GENERAL CHECKING	5,946,830.67	305,150.87	242,916.23	6,009,065.31
M/LST	MAJOR/ LOCAL STREETS				
202	MAJOR STREET FUND	760,326.42	24,098.71	9,029.08	775,396.05
203	LOCAL STREET FUND	499,995.75	14,126.30	1,178.84	512,943.21
	MAJOR/ LOCAL STREETS	1,260,322.17	38,225.01	10,207.92	1,288,339.26
PAY	PAYROLL				
704	PAYROLL CLEARING	87,930.55	0.00	41,314.45	46,616.10
	PAYROLL	87,930.55	0.00	41,314.45	46,616.10
THEM	SAVINGS				
101	GENERAL FUND	461,864.46	0.00	0.00	461,864.46
151	CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE	1,233.29	0.00	0.00	1,233.29
251	INDUSTRIAL PARK FUND	245.93	0.00	0.00	245.93
371	COLLECTION REPLACEMENT FUND	0.65	0.00	0.00	0.65
391	WATER FUND	26,689.95	0.00	0.00	26,689.95
392	WATER REPLACEMENT FUND	20,011.94	0.00	0.00	20,011.94
397	SEWER COLLECTION	3,215.28	0.00	0.00	3,215.28
361	EQUIPMENT FUND	103,652.43	0.00	0.00	103,652.43
	SAVINGS	616,913.93	0.00	0.00	616,913.93
TAX	TAXES				
703	CURRENT TAX COLLECTION FUND	17,158.35	57.51	0.00	17,215.86
	TAXES	17,158.35	57.51	0.00	17,215.86
	TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	7,929,155.67	343,433.39	294,438.60	7,978,150.46

April 12, 2024

I just want to let Council know that on April 1, 2024, I opened another Cemetery Perpetual Care 12 month CD in the amount of \$40,000 at a rate of 4.93%.

Thank you ~ Michelle

CASH SUMMARY BY ACCOUNT FOR WEST BRANCH
FROM 04/01/2024 TO 04/30/2024
FUND: ALL FUNDS
INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

Fund Account	Description	Beginning Balance 04/01/2024	Total Debits	Total Credits	Ending Balance 04/30/2024
Fund 101 GENERAL FUND					
003.300	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT A	100,000.00	0.00	0.00	100,000.00
003.400	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT B	150,000.00	0.00	0.00	150,000.00
	GENERAL FUND	250,000.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00
Fund 151 CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE					
003.401	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT C	112,500.00	0.00	0.00	112,500.00
003.402	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT D	113,500.00	0.00	0.00	113,500.00
003.403	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT E	0.00	40,000.00	0.00	40,000.00
	CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE	226,000.00	40,000.00	0.00	266,000.00
Fund 251 INDUSTRIAL PARK FUND					
003.300	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT A	100,000.00	0.00	0.00	100,000.00
003.400	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT B	25,000.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00
	INDUSTRIAL PARK FUND	125,000.00	0.00	0.00	125,000.00
Fund 661 EQUIPMENT FUND					
003.300	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT A	150,000.00	0.00	0.00	150,000.00
003.400	CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT B	100,000.00	0.00	0.00	100,000.00
	EQUIPMENT FUND	250,000.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00
	TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	851,000.00	40,000.00	0.00	891,000.00



West Branch Police Department

Chief Kenneth W. Walters

130 Page St.

West Branch, Michigan 48661

Phone: 989-345-2627 Fax: 989-345-0083

E-mail: police@westbranch.com

4/8/2024

Honorable Mayor and Council,

This is the March month end report. For the month of March, the department handled 99 Law Enforcement complaints. The department handled 2 blight / ordinance violations with 2 additional follow-ups.

As mentioned in the last council meeting, we have thus far obtained \$64,518.09 in grants for the two replacement officers currently in the police academy. The funds will assist in wages, equipment and uniforms.

Towards the end of this past month, we lost Ofc. Bachelder to FMLA for a few months. Unfortunately, we are now down three officers from normal staffing levels. The two in the police academy will graduate and report here at the beginning of May, however, will need to be with another officer to train for several months. We are attempting to cover as many hours as possible with what we have for the next few months. I would expect to see us getting back to a relative normal by the time Summer arrives. We will further get Ofc. Beehler back over Summer break from the school, that will help as well.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K. Walters", written over a horizontal line.

Chief Kenneth W. Walters

Offense Count Report

Page: 1

Report Criteria:

Start Offense	End Offense	Officer	
01000	99009	ALL	
MARCH2024	TOTAL2024	TOTAL2023	TOTAL2022
03/01/2024-03/31/2024	01/01/2024-03/31/2024	01/01/2023-12/31/2024	01/01/2022-12/31/2022

Offense	Description	MARCH202	TOTAL2024	TOTAL2023	TOTAL2022
11001	SEXUAL PENETR'N PENIS/VAGINA CSC1	0	0	0	1
11005	SEXUAL PENETRATION OBJECT CSC1	0	0	1	0
11007	SEXUAL CONTACT FORCIBLE CSC2	0	0	2	1
11008	SEXUAL CONTACT FORCIBLE CSC4	0	1	4	1
13001	NONAGGRAVATED ASSAULT	3	10	42	19
13002	AGGRAVATED/FELONIOUS ASSAULT	0	0	2	2
13003	INTIMIDATION/STALKING	0	0	0	3
20000	ARSON	0	0	1	0
22001	BURGLARY - FORCED ENTRY	0	0	0	1
22003	BURGLARY - UNLAWFUL ENTRY(NO INTENT	0	0	1	3
23003	LARCENY - THEFT FROM BUILDING	0	0	1	1
23005	LARCENY - THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	0	0	3	3
23007	LARCENY - OTHER	1	1	9	9
24001	MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	0	0	0	1
25000	FORGERY/COUNTERFEITING	0	0	0	1
26001	FRAUD - FALSE PRETENSE/SWINDLE/CONF	0	1	3	0
26002	FRAUD - CREDIT CARD/ATM	0	0	2	1
26003	FRAUD - IMPERSONATION	0	0	1	1
26006	FRAUD - BAD CHECKS	0	0	1	2
26007	FRAUD - IDENTITY THEFT	0	0	3	4
27000	EMBEZZLEMENT	0	0	0	3
28000	STOLEN PROPERTY	0	0	0	1
29000	DAMAGE TO PROPERTY	2	4	34	12
30002	RETAIL FRAUD - THEFT	0	1	3	1
35001	VIOLATION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE	0	0	0	9
36004	SEX OFFENSE - OTHER	0	0	1	0
38001	FAMILY - ABUSE/NEGLECT NONVIOLENT	0	0	3	0
41002	LIQUOR VIOLATIONS - OTHER	0	0	0	1
42000	DRUNKENNESS	0	0	1	0
48000	OBSTRUCTING POLICE	0	0	0	2
49000	ESCAPE/FLIGHT	0	0	0	1
50000	OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE	5	11	43	37
52001	WEAPONS OFFENSE - CONCEALED	0	0	0	1
52003	WEAPONS OFFENSE - OTHER	1	3	4	0
53001	DISORDERLY CONDUCT	0	0	6	0
53002	PUBLIC PEACE - OTHER	0	0	1	0
54001	HIT & RUN MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT	0	0	1	0
54002	OUIL OR OUID	0	2	7	13
54003	DRIVING LAW VIOLATIONS	2	6	36	46
55000	HEALTH AND SAFETY	1	1	2	0
57001	TRESPASS	0	2	23	14
62000	CONSERVATION	0	0	1	0
70000	JUVENILE RUNAWAY	0	0	3	6
70001	Incorrigible	0	0	1	1
70003	Juvenile Truancy	1	2	4	0
70004	Juvenile Issues	0	0	15	1
72000	ANIMAL CRUELTY	0	0	0	1

Offense Count Report

Page: 2

Report Criteria:

Start Offense	End Offense	Officer	
01000	99009	ALL	
MARCH2024	TOTAL2024	TOTAL2023	TOTAL2022
03/01/2024-03/31/2024	01/01/2024-03/31/2024	01/01/2023-12/31/2024	01/01/2022-12/31/2022

Offense	Description	MARCH202	TOTAL2024	TOTAL2023	TOTAL2022
73000	MISCELLANEOUS CRIMINAL OFFENSE	0	0	5	2
75000	SOLICITATION	0	0	0	1
90001	Vehicle Lockouts	2	14	103	69
90002	Motorist Assists	0	1	14	9
90003	Assist E.M.S.	12	27	189	108
90005	City Ordinance Violations	0	0	25	7
90006	Prisoner Transports	0	0	0	1
90007	Parking Complaints	0	1	4	2
90008	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS	1	2	23	12
90009	Maplewood Manor Alarm / Criminal History Checks	1	1	1	0
91001	Delinquent Minors	0	4	11	8
91002	Runaway	0	0	0	1
91003	K-9 Assists	0	0	9	16
91004	Abandoned Vehicle	0	0	0	3
92003	Walk Away (Ment. & Host.)	0	0	2	4
92004	Insanity	1	6	30	23
92005	MIP Civil	1	4	24	1
93001	PROPERTY DAMAGE ACCIDENT/PI	5	12	78	54
93002	Accident, Non-Traffic	1	3	27	26
93003	Civil Traffic Violations	0	0	0	1
93004	Parking Violations	0	0	0	1
93006	Traffic Policing	0	1	3	5
93007	Traffic Safety Public Relations	3	11	19	11
94001	Valid Alarm Activations	0	0	2	0
94002	False Alarm Activations	5	20	103	81
95001	Accident, Fire	0	0	2	3
95003	Inspection, Fire	0	0	0	1
95004	Hazardous Condition	1	1	1	1
97001	Accident, Traffic	0	0	0	1
97003	Accident, Other Shooting	0	0	0	1
98002	Inspections/Investigations -Motor Vehicles	0	0	1	1
98003	Inspections/Investigations -Property	0	1	1	1
98004	Inspections/Investigations -Other	1	3	24	27
98006	Civil Matters/Family Disputes	8	17	94	47
98007	Suspicious Situations/Subjects	8	20	197	109
98008	Lost/Found Property	2	3	18	13
98009	Inspections/Investigations -Drug Overdose	0	0	1	2
99002	Natural Death	0	0	4	5
99003	Missing Persons	0	1	1	0
99007	PR Activities	1	2	24	14
99008	General Assistance	30	81	513	384
99009	General Non-Criminal	0	2	25	36
Totals:		99	283	1843	1296

[illegible]

MINUTES
City of West Branch Board of Review
2024 March Session

Meeting 1

Board of Review Organizational Meeting: March 11, 2024 – 9:00am City Hall 121 N Fourth St
West Branch, MI

Meeting called to order @ 9:00am

Pledge of allegiance was recited

I Roll Call

Present: Michael Pugh (member), Dale Peters (chair), Kim Ervans

II. Election of chair:

Motion by Pugh 2nd by Ervans to elect Dale Peters as board chair. Approved unanimously.

III Public Comment

Public Comments: There were none.

IV. Approve Minutes of December 11, 2023 Board of Review

Motion by Pugh, Second by Peters to approve the December 13 minutes. Approved
unanimously.

V. Adopt Rules of procedures. There will be no appointments – first come, first served. Time
limit for appeals will be 10 minutes.

VI. Proceeding

The assessor had no contentious discussions with any property owner last year.

Handouts prepared by the Assessor were distributed to members and discussed. These
included the poverty guidelines, the CPI values, Appraisal studies for commercial and
agricultural, sales studies for Residential, Land values by class, ECF values.

Motion by Pugh to close the meeting, second by Ervans. Motion approved unanimously. The
meeting closed at 9:30am.

Meeting 2

March 25, 2024 Meeting called to order by chair Peters @ 9:00am

I. Roll Call

Present: Dale Peters (Chair) Michael Pugh (member) Kim Ervans (member)

1. Jon Mullins 052-301-003-00 Poverty exemption granted
2. Dan & Marie Holmes 052-630-025-25 assessment change to 164,700

Meeting closed @ 4 pm

Meeting opened @ 7pm

3. Evelyn Cavada 052-670-001-00 denied

Meeting closed @ 9pm

Meeting 3

March 26, 2023 Meeting called to order by chair Peters @ 9am

I. Roll call

Present: Dale Peters (Chair) Michael Pugh (member) Kim Ervans (member)

4. Eric & Angela Zettle 052-217-007-00 assessment change to 28,500

Meeting Closed @ 4 pm

Respectfully submitted,

James VanWormer, Assessor

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, ON TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024.

Vice-Chairperson Bob David called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Bob David, Josh Erickson, Kara Fachting, Mike Jackson, and Rusty Showalter.

Absent: Yvonne DeRoso and Cori Lucynski.

Others officers in attendance: Acting secretary/zoning administrator/City Manager, John Dantzer

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOTION BY DAVID, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 13, 2024.

Yes — David, Erickson, Fachting, Jackson, Showalter

No – None Absent –DeRoso, Lucynski Motion carried

John Iacoangeli from Beckett and Raeder (attending virtually) continued discussion on the City’s Economic Development Strategy. The Board reviewed the economic overview of the City with the following results being noted:

- The City is the retail hub of the region.
- The results show growth in economic output since 2019.
- The main source of jobs revolve around restaurants, retail, and the medical field.
- There are over 7,000 people employed in the 48661 zip code.
- There is over \$1,000,000,000 in economic output for the region.
- There is a large diversity of business sectors in the region.

The Board also discussed concerns in the area with the two main issues revolving around work force housing and day care. Concerns with the local community college were also discussed.

The Board also went over some key target areas for economic growth within the City.

MOTION BY SHOWALTER SECOND BY ERICKSON, TO EXCUSE MEMBER FACHTING FROM THE FEBRUARY 13TH MEETING.

Yes — David, Erickson, Fachting, Jackson, Showalter

No – None

Absent –DeRoso, Lucynski

Motion carried

The Board discussed the annual update to the Master Plan. No changes were recommended but a grammatical error was noted. It was further noted the rewrite of the plan would begin this spring.

Member Fachting noted the Mobil gas station downtown is closing at the end of the month and will need to be an area of concern for redevelopment.

Member Jackson noted he would like to see the City look into developing a vacant part of the park. Member Erickson, who also serves as the chair for the Recreation Committee, noted he would bring it up to the board as an area for them to look into.

Member David noted he has recently seen more positive response to the road rehabilitation project.

Vice Chairperson David closed the meeting at 6:53 pm.

MEETING OF THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH ELECTION COMMISSION BOARD HELD AT CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET ON FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024.

City Clerk Lori Ann Clover-Gambrel called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Present: Mathew Thompson, and Lori Ann Clover

Absent: Karen Biggs

Others in attendance: None

City Clerk Clover announced that the Public Accuracy Test would be held April 17, 2024 with set up beginning at 10:45 am and the Public Accuracy Test at 11:45 am.

Carol Adair, Jazmine Ewald, Sue Jennings, Nancy Ranger, Clara Roach, and Yvonne Williams were named as election inspectors for the Special Election on May 7, 2024. Yvonne Williams were approved contingent upon receiving her certification scheduled April 24, 2024 prior to the election.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:10 am.

Meeting was reopened at 10:35 am when Member Karen Biggs arrived.

Member Biggs also approved the Election Inspectors listed above and Clerk Clover-Gambrel reviewed the Public Accuracy Testing time.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am



Marilyn Passmore

Director
State Government Affairs - Michigan

April 8, 2024

Via FedEx - Adult Signature Required

City of West Branch
121 North Fourth Street
West Branch, MI 48661
989-345-0500

Re: West Branch City
Franchise renewal MI0458

Dear Franchise Official:

Spectrum Mid-America, LLC, locally known as Charter Communications ("Charter") has appreciated the opportunity to serve the City of West Branch over the years. As you may know, Section 626 of Title VI of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the "Cable Act") contemplates a procedure for a formal procedure for the renewal of franchises. The process under the Cable Act begins with a notice of intent to renew approximately 30 to 36 months prior to the expiration of the franchise. In conformance with the Cable Act, Charter is notifying you that it is our intention to renew the Franchise Agreement whereby we serve your community.

As you may also know, the State of Michigan has adopted streamlined procedures for the renewal of cable franchises. We anticipate the renewal of our franchise under these procedures and will submit the relevant documents as the date of expiration approaches. The franchise expires in February of 2027.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our services to the residents of your community and we look forward to continuing to offer high quality services to the City of West Branch in the years to come. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please feel to contact me at (616) 607-2377 or via email at: Marilyn.Passmore@Charter.com.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marilyn Passmore".

Director, State Government Affairs, Michigan
Spectrum Mid-America, LLC
l/k/a Charter Communications

cc: Corporate Franchise Administrator



The Fiscal Health of Michigan Local Governments 2021 - 2022

Executive Summary

Following local government's unprecedented responsibilities as first responders to the COVID-19 pandemic and their subsequent infusions of aid from the federal government, it is essential to check in on the fiscal health of Michigan's local governments. This report analyzes local government financial data reported to the State of Michigan in 2021 and 2022 to develop a set of indicators to capture various aspects of local fiscal health. It finds that for short-term measures related to healthy reserves, adequate cash, and balanced budgets, most communities are doing well. However, when it comes to measures of long-term ability to meet financial and service obligations, there is more variability. Some communities struggle with high liability burdens from debt, pensions, and retiree healthcare benefits. There are also fairly wide ranges in the amounts of spending per capita and the share of budgets spent on public safety, suggesting that communities vary in their ability and/or desire to provide local services. Part of this variation may be driven by local governments' lack of autonomy over revenue policy. They have very limited ability to alter revenues either from property taxes - on which counties and cities are more heavily reliant - or from revenue sharing - on which villages and townships are more heavily reliant. Looking forward, it will be important to monitor local finances not only to ensure that short-term indicators remain strong, but also to proactively respond to any looming warning signs associated with long-term liabilities and inadequate service delivery.

Introduction

As Michigan communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and move toward an uncertain economic future, it is important to monitor local government fiscal health so that we may ensure that basic community services are provided safely and consistently. Every day, residents and businesses rely on local services like policing, transportation, water, sewage, and health systems. In order to maintain these services, local governments need to be financially healthy in both the short- and the long-terms.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government made unprecedented investments in state and local governments through the CARES Act (2020) and the American Rescue Plan Act (2021), as well as other more targeted funding programs. Michigan local governments received billions of dollars to protect and bolster local services and invest in infrastructure to support future growth.

However, federal aid is a one-time infusion and is unlikely to address ongoing sources of economic stress including population loss and economic stagnation. In the Spring 2022 Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), only 8% of local leaders thought that federal funding would "significantly" improve their fiscal health, with another 44% estimating that it might "somewhat" improve their fiscal health, but 42% expected federal aid to

Authors Stephanie Leiser
University of Michigan

Margaret Walthall
University of Michigan

Natalie Fitzpatrick
University of Michigan

have little to no effect.¹ As of spring 2023, 63% of local governments rate their level of fiscal stress as low while 8% (the equivalent of 148 localities) rate their stress as high, essentially unchanged from 2022 (65%), 2021 (65%), and 2020 (64%). Local leaders also report increasing concerns about long-term fiscal stress and doubts about the long-term impact of federal aid.²

Looking forward, while the economic outlook for the state is largely positive,³ Michigan's local governments face ongoing structural challenges that make them particularly susceptible to fiscal stress and unable to take advantage of economic recovery compared to local governments in other states.⁴ While surveys of local officials such as the MPPS can provide valuable insights on local fiscal conditions, it is also important to monitor local financial data, which provides a more standardized picture of financial conditions.

This report analyzes data from Michigan local governments' annual financial statements, as reported to the Michigan Department of Treasury, to establish general facts and trends about different aspects of local government fiscal health. To provide extra context, the report also includes insights from MPPS surveys of local leaders.⁵ While this report provides an initial snapshot, ongoing monitoring can help local leaders understand how their governments compare to their peers and identify potential areas of concern to watch more closely in the future.

Data and Method

The data used in this report are from the FY 2021–FY 2022 Annual Financial Report (F-65) submitted by local units of government and compiled by the Michigan Department of Treasury.⁶ The data were downloaded in July 2023 and include the following number of observations:

Table 1
Sample size by fiscal year and jurisdiction type

	FY 2021	FY 2022
Cities (275 total)	275	253
Villages (258 total)	251	218
Townships (1,240 total)	1,216	1,077
Counties (83 total)	83	26

Data were cleaned to remove any obvious errors (e.g. values were reported as negative instead of positive) and merged with 2020 Census population data. At the time of the data collection for this report, the data for FY 2022 were incomplete for many counties that have a December 31 fiscal year close. In addition, although certain local units may be included in the dataset, if they did not report complete data, they may not be reflected in all ratios and measures calculated in this report. While the tables found throughout this report typically show both 2021 and 2022 data for all jurisdiction types, numbers in the text as well as data shown in the figures use 2022 data for cities, villages, and townships and 2021 data for counties.

In the scholarly literature, financial condition is defined as a government's ability to meet financial and service obligations. Financial condition is multidimensional and reflects not only a government's financial management decisions (e.g. budgetary decisions) but external economic and political factors that affect resources or constraints on decision-making.⁷



The concept of financial condition or solvency is often measured along a time horizon, where the focus can vary from the very near term to the very long term. Cash solvency focuses on the very near term—whether a government has sufficient liquidity to meet short-term obligations. Budgetary solvency focuses on the sufficiency of revenues to cover spending during the current budgetary period. Long-term solvency focuses on the government's ability to meet long-term obligations a year or more into the future. Service solvency also takes a long-term perspective, but instead of focusing on liabilities, it focuses on the government's ability to maintain high-quality services for its constituents.⁸

For this analysis, we measure each of these dimensions of financial condition using financial ratios that are derived from information found in the F-65 data. The ratios used in this analysis are commonly used by credit rating agencies, state oversight bodies, and researchers.⁹

For each financial indicator, we report median values broken down by year and jurisdiction type. Medians are reported instead of means (i.e. averages) to minimize the influence of outliers that have very high or very low values. While outliers may reflect “true” values, they also can reflect errors. For this analysis therefore, median values better reflect a “typical” case than mean values. For some indicators, the entire distribution of values is shown so readers can get a sense of the shape and range of values.

Michigan local governments' cash solvency generally appears to be quite strong

One way to assess the fiscal health of local governments is to focus on indicators of short-term cash solvency. Measures of cash solvency are intended to capture whether a government has enough liquid resources to meet current obligations or to address an emergency. Although cash solvency measures can be applied to assess liquidity in any fund, they typically focus on the general fund because it is the primary operating fund for most governments. As detailed below, these metrics suggest that Michigan local governments' cash solvency generally appears to be quite strong.

General fund balance ratio

Within the general fund, arguably the most important number is the unrestricted general fund balance, which is the portion of a government's savings that is not restricted in how it can be used. The unrestricted general fund balance often represents the “emergency reserves” or “rainy day” fund for many governments and can be drawn down to respond to emergencies or fill unexpected budgetary shortfalls. The Government Finance Officers Association recommends that governments maintain an unrestricted general fund balance of at least two months of regular operating revenues or expenditures. In other words, the ratio of

Note on Data Limitations

High-quality financial data are essential to monitor the fiscal health of local governments and detect signs of stress early, before a crisis develops. Most researchers consider data from audited financial statements (or ACFRs) to be the best source of information for assessing local fiscal health. While Michigan local governments are required to produce ACFR documents, the information is “locked up” in a PDF, and researchers must devise ways to extract the data for analysis, which is prohibitively time-consuming and expensive.

The data in this report are from the Michigan F-65 form that local governments manually fill out. Much of the information in the F-65 form is also included in ACFRs, so local governments should be copying numbers directly from the ACFRs. However, preliminary research has shown discrepancies between F-65 and ACFR data, likely due to human error or omission, raising concerns about data quality. Efforts to improve data reliability and completeness by digitizing ACFRs (for example through XBRL) could ensure data quality as well as eliminate the time and expense of manually copying data into a redundant format.

unrestricted general fund balance to revenues should be around at least 15 to 20%, although it is not uncommon for governments to keep their fund balances significantly larger. Some local governments, for example, use the general fund balance to save up funding for large purchases (for example, a fire truck) in addition to its role as emergency reserves.

Table 2

Cash solvency indicators (medians) by jurisdiction type and year

	Median general fund balance ratio		Median days of cash on hand: Governmental Funds	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Counties	0.273	0.241	200.20	222.91
Cities	0.378	0.390	232.78	257.10
Villages	0.784	0.808	454.84	691.70
Townships	1.431	1.468	585.95	490.20

The median unrestricted general fund balance to revenue ratios for counties, cities, villages, and townships are reported in Table 2. Counties have the lowest median at 24 – 27%, still comfortably above the recommended minimum. Townships have the highest median, almost 150% of revenues in FY 2022. Cities and villages are in the middle, with medians of 39 and 80% respectively.

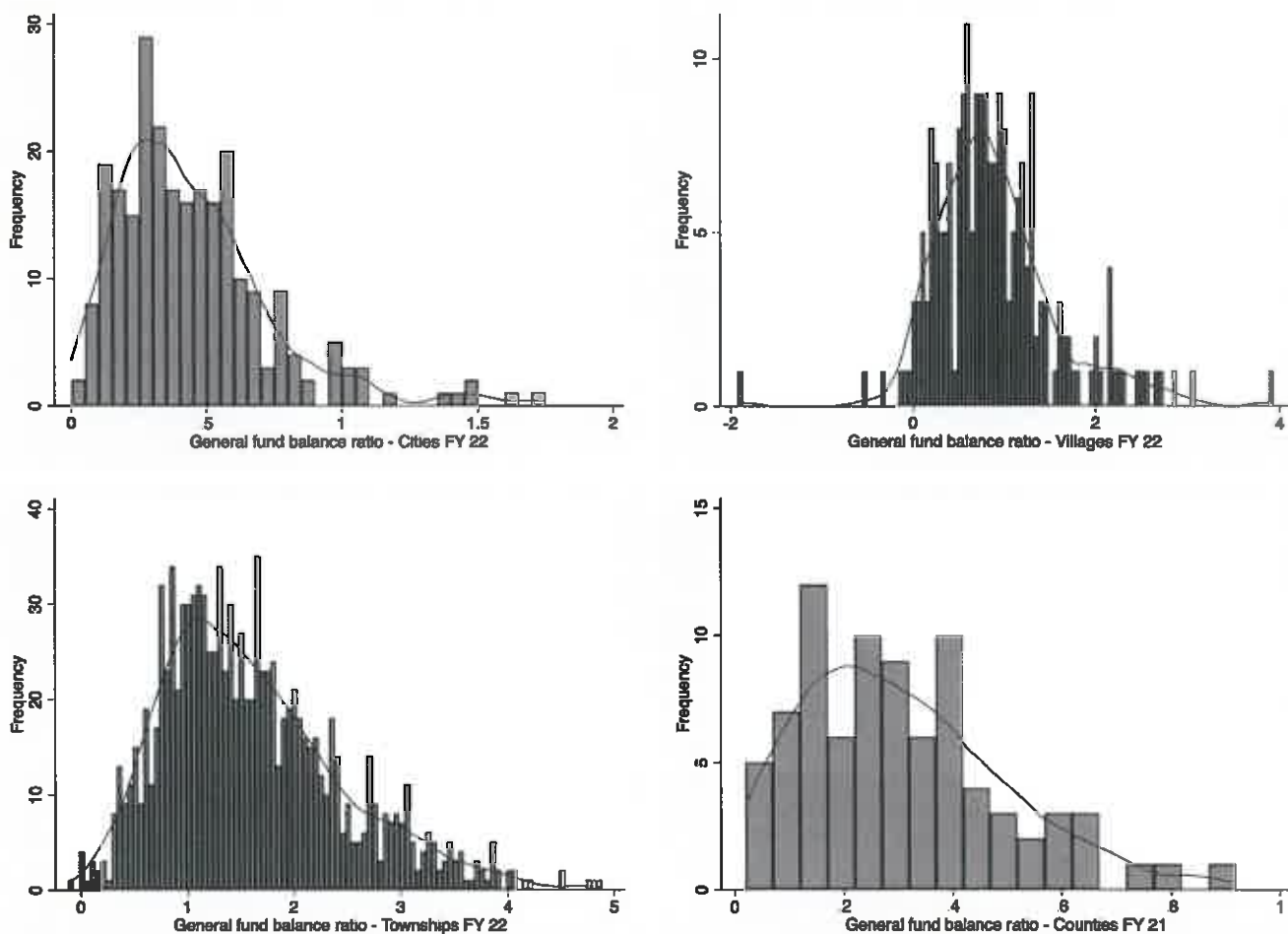
Local government officials say:

Most Michigan local officials say their general fund balance is “about right.” On the Spring 2023 MPPS, 72% of local officials statewide said their general fund balance is about right while 18% said their balance is too low, and just 6% reported that it is too high. Village officials were most likely to say their balance is too low (30%), while township officials were least likely (15%).¹⁰



Figure 1 includes histograms that show the ratios of unrestricted general fund balance to revenues for jurisdictions of each type. While most jurisdictions are at or above 15 to 20%, 29 cities (11%), 18 villages (7%), 11 townships (<1%), and 19 counties (23%) have ratios below the recommended values, a potential cause for concern.

Figure 1
Unrestricted general fund balance to revenue ratio, by jurisdiction type



Each distribution is also right-skewed, with most local units near the median but a long “tail” of local units with particularly high ratio values. This right-skew is especially pronounced for townships, where 24% keep fund balances in excess of 200% of revenues. This skew may reflect townships using their general fund as a savings account for expected large purchases or other future large expenses.

Days of cash on hand

Another way to evaluate cash solvency is to assess the government’s cash balance. While unrestricted fund balances are typically held as cash, governments may have additional sources of cash or cash equivalent resources they can use to fund operations. In addition, even if unrestricted fund balances are low or negative, governments still need to keep cash (possibly borrowed) on hand to maintain operations. A general rule of thumb is to keep at least 90 days of cash on hand, in case revenue flows were disrupted or emergency expenditures were required (both of which happened with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020).

Days of cash on hand is calculated by dividing the government's cash balance by daily operating expenditures. The median values for each jurisdiction type are reported in *Table 2* (above). Median days of cash on hand are very high for all jurisdiction types: in the lower 200s for cities and counties and over 400 days for villages and townships. These figures are likely boosted by federal pandemic aid, which governments received in 2021 and 2022 and have until 2026 to fully expend.¹¹

Overall Cash Solvency

Overall, Michigan local governments' cash solvency appears to be quite strong. While some local units still have low general fund balances, most have maintained strong cash positions, buoyed by federal aid. Excluding the largest jurisdictions that received direct aid, the median "non-entitlement unit" in Michigan received \$175,268 under the American Rescue Plan Act.¹² In addition, municipalities with fewer than 50,000 residents (97% of Michigan local governments) can use up to \$10 million (or up to the size of their grant) of their American Rescue Plan Act aid for "revenue replacement," which means their grant is unrestricted cash that can be used for any purpose, whether replenishing fund balances or supporting expenditures.

Key findings:

- Wide variation in local government general fund balances, but very few are lower than recommended.
- Median number of days of cash on hand is high for all jurisdiction types, but particularly townships and villages.

Federal aid and economic conditions have strengthened Michigan local government budgetary solvency

Another way to assess the fiscal health of local governments is to examine budgetary solvency, which focuses on the current budget period. This dimension of financial condition assesses changes in fund balances and net assets, capturing how consistently an organization's expenses are covered by their revenue. To achieve a more detailed view of budgetary solvency, we separated governmental activities reflected in the general fund from business-type activities reflected in enterprise funds – for example water/sewer system funds, parking funds, recreation center funds, etc. While governmental activities are supported by general revenues like property taxes and state revenue sharing, business-type activities are self-sustaining, relying on customer revenues. Enterprise revenues typically cannot be used to subsidize the government's core operations without legislative approval or a voter referendum.¹³

It is important to keep in mind that budgetary solvency is a function of both revenue and expenditures and there are multiple ways to achieve balanced budgets. A potential deficit can be addressed by either raising revenue, tapping reserves, or (more commonly) cutting expenditures. Therefore, budgetary solvency indicators capture the effects of both external conditions (e.g. economic pressures that slow tax base growth) and internal/management responses (e.g. trimming expenditures). Overall, the indicators described below suggest that Michigan local government budgetary solvency is fairly strong, most likely due to a combination of federal aid and underlying economic conditions.

General Fund Margin

The general fund margin ratio measures how net revenues (revenue – expenditures) compare to total revenues for the general fund – in other words, it is analogous to the general fund's "profit margin." Of course, it is not the goal of government to achieve high margins and earn profits, but municipalities are required to balance their budgets so it is fiscally responsible to ensure that margins are at least slightly positive to provide a cushion against



deficits. Because the general fund is the primary operating fund for public services, this ratio captures how well governmental general revenues like property taxes and state revenue sharing funds are covering expenditures.

The median values reported in *Table 3* suggest that margins for each jurisdiction type were relatively healthy. Counties had the lowest median of 3.0% in FY 2021 with townships having the highest median of 19.3% for FY 2022. Cities and villages were in the middle, with cities having a 3.6% median margin and villages having a 10.3% median margin.

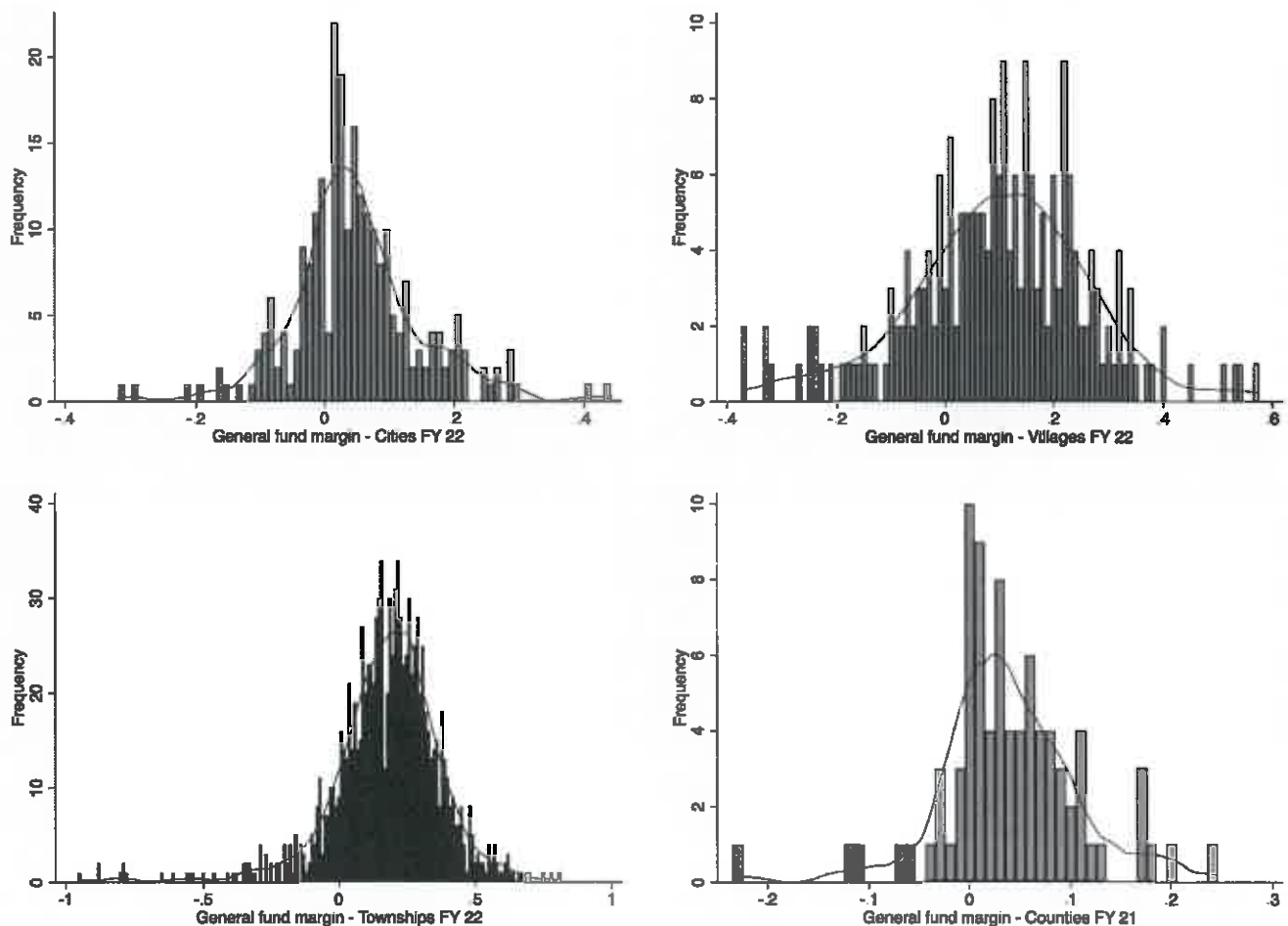
Table 3

Budgetary solvency indicators (median), by jurisdiction type and year

	Median general fund margin		Median general fund balance growth		Median enterprise fund margin		Median enterprise fund balance growth	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Counties	0.030	0.036	0.08	0.10	0.180	0.142	0.05	0.04
Cities	0.064	0.036	0.14	0.08	0.102	0.100	0.03	0.03
Villages	0.094	0.103	0.11	0.12	-	-	-	-
Townships	0.130	0.193	0.08	0.12	-	-	-	-

Figure 2 shows histograms for each jurisdiction type of the ratio of general fund net revenue to total revenues. Each jurisdiction type shows a relatively symmetrical distribution around its median. Counties have the smallest dispersion, with most observations between zero and 10% and townships have the widest dispersion, with most observations between zero and 50%, but also a number of outliers with very low and very high margins.¹⁴ Compared to counties and townships, cities (29%) and villages (25%) have a larger portion of observations with negative margins, meaning that expenditures exceeded revenues, which may be a warning sign of fiscal stress.

Figure 2
General fund balance margin by jurisdiction type





General Fund Balance Growth

A similar way to assess the budgetary solvency of a government is to calculate how the surplus/deficit for the year compares to the overall fund balance at the beginning of the year. In other words, this ratio measures how much the general fund balance has grown or declined in the past year. For both FY 2021 and FY 2022, each jurisdiction type shows strong general fund balance growth (see *Table 3* above). In FY 2021 counties and townships had the lowest median growth ratio of 8% with cities having the highest median at 14%. And in FY 2022 villages and townships each increased their median ratio to 12% while the city median growth rate declined to 8%, still quite a strong rate.

Enterprise Fund Margin

Enterprise funds encompass all business-type activities, which typically have fee-for-service type revenue and are designed to be financially self-sustaining. Examples of local government enterprise activities include drinking water systems, sewer/wastewater systems, senior housing, parking, airport, etc. The margin ratio is analogous to a profit margin for the combined enterprise activities of a given government. Again, accumulating profit is not a goal of enterprise funds, but aiming for modest margins allows them to keep fees reasonable while building reserves. For both counties and cities, the median enterprise fund margin exceeds that of the median general fund margin (see *Table 3*, above). Counties have a median enterprise fund margin of 18% while cities have a median enterprise fund margin of 10%. Villages and townships are excluded from these calculations because they are usually smaller and make less use of enterprise funds.

Enterprise Fund Balance Growth

Strong margins mean that enterprise fund balances are growing. As shown in *Table 3* above, counties and cities had median enterprise fund balance growth of 5% and 3% respectively. These growth rates are not as high as the general fund growth rates, but this is likely because enterprise fund balances were stronger to begin with.

Overall Budgetary Solvency

Overall, local government budgetary solvency appears to be strong due in part to underlying economic conditions and pandemic aid. As mentioned earlier, many municipalities are using their pandemic aid funds to support governmental activities, allowing for growth in general fund balances. In addition, although investment in water, sewer, and broadband systems are an approved use of ARPA funds, not all communities have these functions, so ARPA-related support is less likely to show up in enterprise funds. Therefore, the underlying growth and strength of enterprise funds is likely attributable in part to underlying economic conditions.

Key findings:

- While revenues exceed expenditures for most jurisdictions, there are some potential warning signs for cities and villages with negative general fund margins.
- For both FY 2021 and FY 2022, local governments show strong general fund balance growth, across all jurisdiction types.
- Enterprise funds generally show signs of growing revenues and fund balances.



Long-term fiscal solvency indicators show a mixed picture

While cash and budgetary solvency focus on a shorter time horizon, long-term solvency indicators focus on a government's ability to fulfill its obligations several years into the future. Assessing long-term solvency, therefore, usually involves developing measures to scale and compare the burden of balance sheet liabilities, including debt and unfunded pension and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligations (e.g. retiree healthcare benefits). Allowing long-term liabilities to grow can exacerbate fiscal stress for governments as it requires them to redirect resources away from current services and toward the fixed costs of debt service and pension/OPEB costs.

When assessing long-term solvency, it is important to remember that debt is not inherently bad. Responsible use of debt instruments can allow governments to invest in infrastructure and assets that will create long-term net benefits for their communities. Therefore, we must assess long-term solvency indicators in the larger context of a government's fiscal health.

While municipal debt is relatively closely regulated by state statute – through, for example, debt limits and required debt management practices – until recently, much less attention has been paid to municipal pension and OPEB liabilities. When governments promise employees pension and retiree healthcare benefits, the estimated monetary value of these benefits becomes a liability for them. In order to offset this liability, governments can “pre-fund” the benefits – set aside and invest funds so that they can be drawn down to pay future benefits.

When pension or OPEB plans are “fully funded”, it means that the assets in the plan are expected to be sufficient to cover the estimated future payouts. However, plans can become underfunded for a number of reasons. For example, governments may not pay enough into the plan, invested assets may underperform or lose value in market downturns, or liabilities may grow due to other outside factors such as high rates of healthcare inflation.

Many local governments have run into fiscal challenges in part because they have promised retirees benefits without “pre-funding” them – that is, setting aside funds in advance. As a result, these expected future benefit payouts can become unfunded liabilities for governments. In extreme cases, the heavy burden of unfunded liabilities can facilitate a fiscal crisis. For example, upon entering bankruptcy protection in 2013, about 40% of the City of Detroit's \$18 billion in debt was attributable to unfunded pension and OPEB liabilities.¹⁵

To increase transparency and encourage local governments to address these unfunded liabilities, Michigan Public Act 202 of 2017 required local governments with pension and OPEB plans to report and standardize information about the plans' costs, assumptions, and funded status. The Act also requires plans that are severely underfunded to create a “Corrective Action Plan” to improve their funded status.¹⁶

In 2022, the State of Michigan took additional action to help local governments with unfunded pension obligations. The FY 2023 budget included \$750 million for a Protecting MI Pension Grant Program to help pay down pension debt for local plans that were less than 60% funded.¹⁷ These payments will likely improve the long-term solvency of many struggling municipalities.

Debt to Revenue

Focusing first on ordinary debt, the debt to revenue ratio helps us assess the overall size of a government's debt burden. By dividing debt by revenue, this ratio allows for comparisons of debt burdens across different sizes of municipalities. Generally speaking, debt to revenue ratios below one – meaning that the amount of the municipality's debt is equal to OR less than one year's worth of revenue – are not a cause for concern, but larger ratio values may signal outsized debt burdens.

Table 4 shows the median debt to revenue ratios for each type of jurisdiction. Not surprisingly, cities and villages, which tend to provide more capital-intensive services like drinking water and roads, have higher median ratios – their total debt is around 48 – 56% of annual revenues. Counties on the other hand often provide more labor-intensive services like courts and public health, so they make less use of debt. The median township has no debt at all.

Local government officials say:

In 2023, 15% of local governments said their ability to repay debt had improved compared to the prior fiscal year, while 2% said it had decreased. However, among cities and counties, who received the majority of ARPA funds, 30% reported an improvement in ability to repay debt.¹⁸

Meanwhile, around 20% of local governments predicted an increase in their amount of debt, while 11-13% predicted a decrease in debt, and 47-52% predicted no change. In 2023, increases in debt were most commonly predicted by cities (39%) and villages (31%) compared to townships (13%) and counties (11%).¹⁹

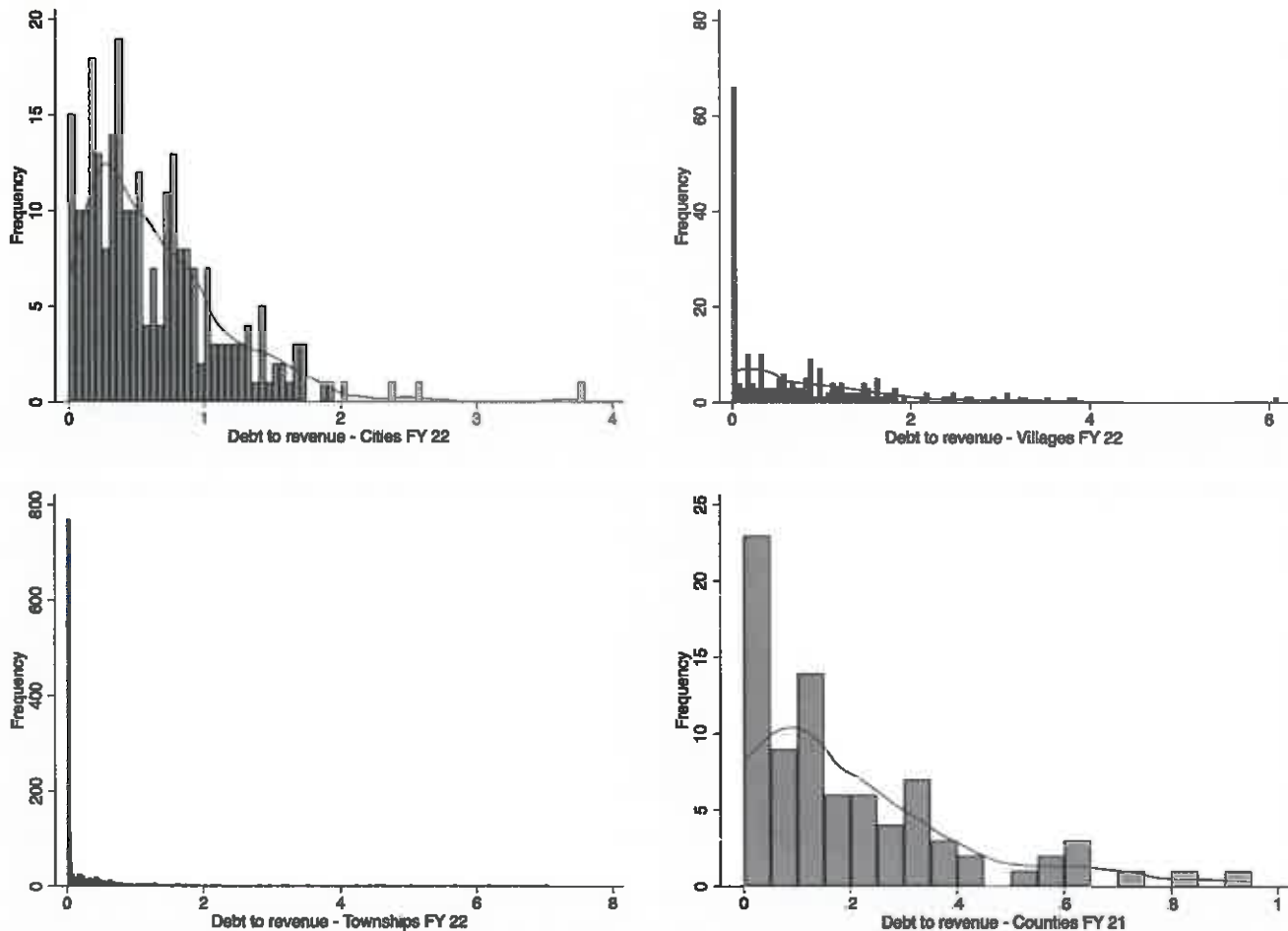
Table 4
Long-term solvency indicators (medians), by jurisdiction type and year

	Median debt to revenue		Median debt per capita		Median long-term liabilities to revenue		Median long-term liabilities per capita	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Counties	0.135	0.095	\$196.95	\$135.88	0.361	0.289	\$692.84	\$682.75
Cities	0.489	0.496	\$1,137.84	\$1,205.43	1.192	0.402	\$2,816.07	\$2,888.71
Villages	0.564	0.481	\$841.37	\$823.90	-	-	-	-
Townships	0.000	0.000	\$0.00	\$0.00	-	-	-	-

Figure 3 shows the entire distribution of debt to revenue ratios for each jurisdiction type. These distributions show that while most municipalities have relatively low ratios near 1.0, each distribution is right-skewed, meaning that there are a small number of outlier jurisdictions (4 cities, 20 townships, and 18 villages) with high debt burdens above 2.0.



Figure 3
Debt to revenue ratios, by jurisdiction type



Debt Per Capita

Instead of dividing by revenue, another way to scale and compare debt burdens is to calculate debt per capita. As shown in Table 4 (above), median debt per capita is highest for cities at \$1,138 to \$1,205, followed by villages at \$824 to \$841. Counties typically carry much less debt per capita, around \$136 to \$197, while the median township has no debt. There is not necessarily a strict rule of thumb about what is an appropriate amount of debt per capita, but taking on higher than average debt per capita is riskier for communities that have lower than average income or property values per capita.

Long-term Liabilities to Revenue

Turning to a more comprehensive measure of the long-term financial burdens local governments face, we add pension and OPEB liabilities to debt to calculate a ratio of long-term liabilities divided by revenue. Because few villages and townships have pension (67 villages and 18 townships) and OPEB (18 villages and 36 townships) liabilities, these calculations focus on cities and counties (see Table 4 above). In FY 2021, median city long-term liabilities were 1.19 times the size of annual revenue, considerably higher than the 0.49 ratio that includes only

traditional debt. This means that pension and OPEB liabilities comprise more than half of the overall long-term liability burden for cities. The median ratio of long-term liabilities to revenues for counties was around 0.29 to 0.36, nearly triple the ratio value when only debt is included, implying that for the median county, pension and OPEB liabilities comprise around two-thirds of the overall burden of long-term liabilities.

Long-term Liabilities Per Capita

Using our comprehensive measure of long-term liabilities and scaling by population, we arrive at long-term liabilities per capita. Table 4 shows median long-term liabilities per capita for cities and counties. The median city had long-term liabilities per capita of \$2,816 to \$2,889 (compared to \$1,138 to \$1,205 per capita for debt only), while the median county had long-term liabilities per capita of \$683 to \$693 (compared to \$136 to \$197 per capita for debt only).

Pension Funded Ratios

The indicators in Table 5 take a closer look at pension and OPEB liabilities. First, the table includes funded ratios for only jurisdictions that have these plans. The funded ratio is the ratio of plan assets to plan liabilities. A “fully funded” plan with enough assets to cover expected liabilities will have a funded ratio of 1.0 or 100%. Underfunded plans will have ratios less than 100%, and the government’s balance sheet will include a liability for the underfunded amount.

Table 5
Pension and OPEB indicators (medians), by jurisdiction type and year

	General employees pension funded ratio		OPEB funded ratio	
	N	Median	N	Median
2021				
Counties	78	74.50	69	34.20
Cities	218	68.30	182	19.60
Villages	72	76.95	84	37.13
Townships	73	75.75	26	13.79
2022				
Counties	25	73.70	21	8.00
Cities	195	72.22	161	25.00
Villages	67	80.00	18	19.50
Townships	47	79.00	35	24.51

*Note: N = number of jurisdictions reporting having a pension or OPEB plan. Note that as of this data collection, many counties had not yet reported their data for 2022.



Table 5 shows median funded ratios for general employee pension plans, the most common type of pension plan. For counties, villages, and townships, median funded ratios are in the mid-70% range, although a much higher share of counties report having pension plans. For cities, the median funded ratio is slightly lower, about 68 to 72%. Looking ahead to FY 2023 and FY 2024, however, the median (or at least the average) funded ratio should rise as the Protecting MI Pension Grant Program payments are disbursed to municipalities with plans with funded ratios of less than 60%.

OPEB Funded Ratios

Table 5 also shows median OPEB plan funded ratios for jurisdictions that have these plans. In general, compared to pension plans, OPEB plans are less common and less likely to be pre-funded. In fact, it is not uncommon for OPEB plans to have 0% funded ratios, meaning that the jurisdiction follows a “pay-as-you-go” policy, funding the current year’s obligations one year at a time instead of pre-funding benefits. In FY 2021, median OPEB funded ratios are higher for counties and villages – in the mid 30% range – and lower for cities and townships – in the teens-range. Because OPEB plans have such low funded ratios, paying OPEB obligations can be a heavy burden on local governments. However, compared to pension plans that have constitutional protections, it is easier for jurisdictions to trim OPEB benefits in the event of fiscal trouble.

Overall Long-term Solvency

Compared to the more sanguine assessments of cash and budgetary solvency, the picture of long-term solvency for Michigan local governments is mixed. While many jurisdictions have been successful in keeping long-term liabilities low, the data suggest there are a small number of outliers with very heavy burdens, especially related to pension and OPEB plans. Moreover, local governments cannot use their ARPA funds to pay down unfunded pension liabilities.

Looking to the future, it will be very important to monitor local governments with large liability burdens and encourage policies that stabilize and grow their tax bases so that their revenues can at least keep up with their fixed costs.

Key findings:

- While most municipalities are within the desired range, a small number of outlier jurisdictions have high debt burdens, potentially a cause for concern.
- Cities carry the highest median debt per capita, while the median township has no debt.
- Pension and OPEB obligations make up more than half of long-term liability burden for cities, and around two-thirds for counties.
- Pension funded ratios are typically around the mid-70% range, slightly lower for cities, and state support should provide much needed help for jurisdictions with very low funded ratios.

Local government officials say:

In spring 2022 and 2023, about one third (32%) of local governments said that the cost of employee pensions was increasing, one of the highest percentages since tracking began in 2009.²⁰ However, in 2022, just 11% said they planned to increase employees’ share of contributions to retirement funds.²¹ Meanwhile, about one in five jurisdictions said the cost of OPEB is increasing in 2022 and 2023.²²

Local governments show wide variation in capacity to deliver services

In the long-term, the fiscal health and sustainability of a government depends not only on whether it can fulfill its formal financial obligations but whether it can also deliver high-quality public services to residents that depend on them. After all, governments incur debts and promise employees benefits precisely so that they can provide services.

Data from financial statements, however, are more focused on financial accountability and control rather than assessing service level and quality, which makes it difficult to measure and assess service solvency. The indicators discussed below provide important clues about services, but there may be greater ambiguity about how to interpret the meaning of the data and we may need to make additional assumptions. For example, a community with high expenditures per capita may be responding to a high community demand for services – suggesting strong service solvency – or high expenditures may be a sign that communities have high fixed costs associated with infrastructure or debt – a potential source of fiscal stress.

It's also important to understand the possible relationship between long-term and service solvency. For fiscally healthy governments, there is little interaction between the two because there are enough resources to meet long-term financial obligations as well as provide quality services. For stressed governments, however, tensions can arise as to whether scarce resources are allocated toward providing current services or paying down long-term liabilities.

Expenditures per capita

To gain insight into how well a government entity is balancing its service-related spending to its residents, we can examine the expenditures per capita ratio to see how much is being spent on services per resident in a jurisdiction. In general, we expect higher spending for cities that often have diverse and complex service needs and are more densely populated. Villages and townships, on the other hand, typically have smaller populations and fewer service needs. Table 6 shows median expenditures per capita, broken down by both jurisdiction type and population size. Consistent with expectations, cities spend the most, a little over \$1,200 per capita at the median, about four times the amount the median township spends, with villages and counties in between.

Local government officials say:

In 2023, 24% of local officials projected an increase in the amount of services provided in the coming fiscal year, the highest percentage projecting an increase since the MPPS began in 2009. However, these service increases are mostly expected to be modest, with just 2% predicting they will significantly increase the amount of services they provide. Counties were most likely to predict an increase (30%), compared to cities (27%), townships (24%) and villages (22%).²⁴ Increases in service provision were also more frequently projected in jurisdictions with larger populations.

**Table 6**

Service Solvency Indicators (medians), by jurisdiction type, population category, and year

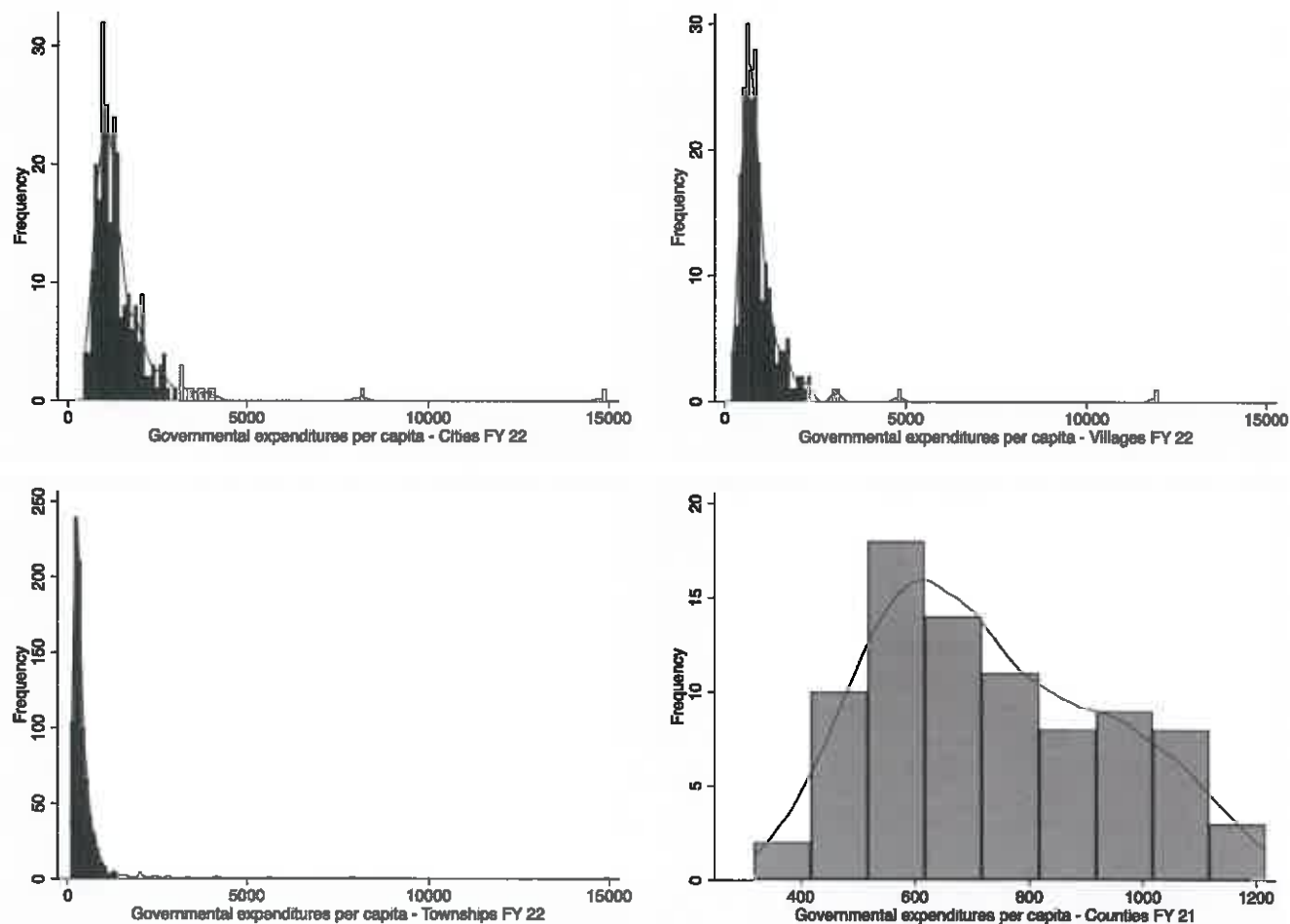
	Median governmental expenditures per capita		Median governmental assets per capita		Median public safety share of general fund spending	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Counties	\$708.75	\$702.85	\$323.21	\$285.58	0.319	0.289
Cities	\$1,207.15	\$1,212.19	\$1,581.90	\$1,651.24	0.420	0.402
Villages	\$698.37	\$776.17	\$1,090.48	\$1,158.21	-	-
Townships	\$307.70	\$310.11	\$180.46	\$183.92	-	-

Population	Median governmental expenditures per capita				
	< 1,500	1,500 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 30,000	> 30,000
Counties FY 21	-	\$1,082.30	\$864.92	\$776.71	\$623.71
Cities FY 22	\$1,062.03	\$1,060.29	\$1,293.28	\$1,269.39	\$1,374.66
Villages FY 22	\$733.83	\$850.99	\$925.96	\$1,212.39	-
Townships FY 22	\$360.86	\$282.57	\$306.83	\$368.99	\$578.73

Population	Median public safety share of general fund spending				
	< 1,500	1,500 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 30,000	> 30,000
Cities FY 2022	0.143	0.368	0.418	0.470	0.555

Figure 4 provides further detail on the full distribution of expenditures per capita for each jurisdiction type. Each of these figures follow a right-skewed pattern, suggesting that there are a number of outliers with very large expenditures per capita. We can investigate this further by examining how per capita spending breaks down by population size. For cities, villages, and townships there is a general positive correlation that shows that as population increases, municipalities spend more per capita. In other words, jurisdictions with larger populations usually provide more public services (e.g. public safety, economic development, road repair, etc.) and therefore spend more – even on a per capita basis – compared with small communities. However, for counties the correlation is negative, showing that they tend to spend less per capita as population increases. This may be because many services counties provide, such as courts and election administration, have a large amount of fixed costs the county needs to incur regardless of the size of its population.

Figure 4
Expenditures per capita, by jurisdiction type



Governmental assets per capita

While expenditures per capita provides insight into the current level of spending, to gain insight into the wealth and long-term service capacity of an entity we use the governmental assets per capita ratio. Local government assets primarily consist of roads and other infrastructure, but they can also include buildings, land, vehicles, or other equipment governments use to deliver services (Note: this ratio does not include assets in enterprise funds, such as water or sewer infrastructure).

As shown in Table 6, in FY 2022 cities and villages have the highest median governmental assets per capita at \$1,651 and \$1,158 respectively, with counties and townships being significantly lower at \$286 and \$184 respectively. The higher amount of assets – as well as the greater use of debt described above – in cities and villages largely reflects the more capital-intensive nature of the services they deliver.

Public Safety as a Share of Spending

Municipalities often display their financial priorities through how they allocate their funds. With a responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of their residents, public safety services are often the single largest spending

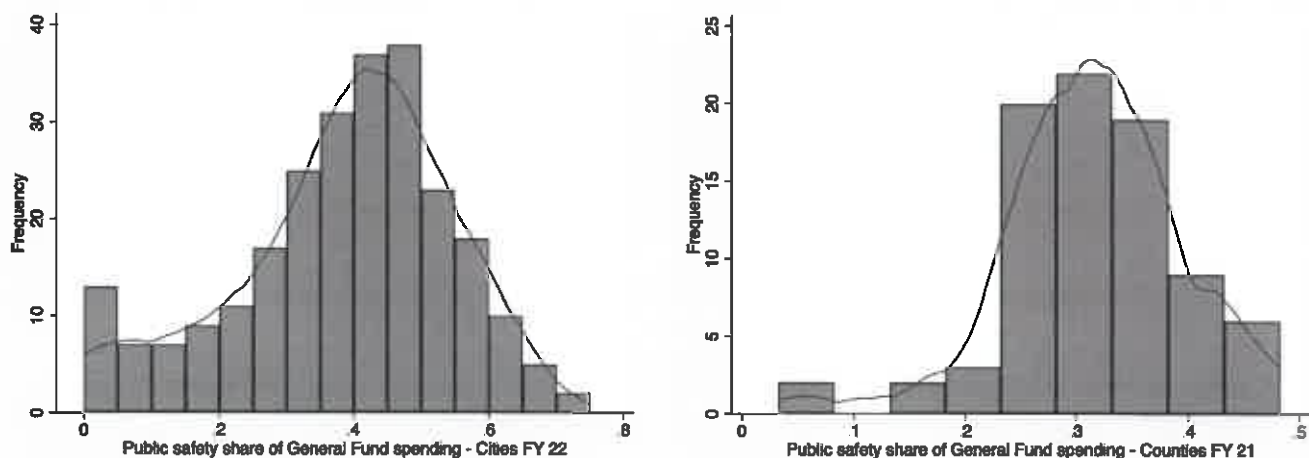


category for general fund budgets. Table 6 shows that public safety spending as a share of total general fund spending is about 40 – 42% for the median city and 29 – 32% for the median county. Villages and townships were excluded from this calculation as most of them do not have substantial public safety spending

Figure 5 provides a more detailed illustration of the range of public safety spending for cities and counties. Most counties are within 10 percentage points of the median 30%, suggesting that counties are relatively uniform in the level of public safety services they provide.

Figure 5

Public safety spending as a share of total general fund spending, by jurisdiction type



For cities, however, the range is quite wide. Some spend as much as 70 to 80% of their general fund budgets on public safety while others spend less than 10%. This degree of variance could stem from differing community needs, preferences, or resource constraints. Table 6 provides a further breakdown of how city public safety spending varies with population, and shows that as population increases, so does the share of the general fund spent on public safety. The smallest cities that have a population of less than 1,500 spend a median of 14% of their general fund on public safety while cities that have a population of more than 30,000 spend a median of 56%.

Reliance on Property Taxes

An important aspect of service solvency is understanding where a local government's resources come from and what constraints it faces in ensuring that resources are adequate to ensure its ability to provide high-quality services. For most local governments, property taxes are the single largest source of general revenue. While property tax revenue tends to be reliable and consistent from year to year, there are many restrictions on property tax revenues²⁶ and they often fail to keep pace with increasing cost pressures. As a result, local officials often have little ability to change their property tax policies in response to local needs and over-reliance on property tax revenue puts local governments at risk of fiscal stress.

Table 7

Service Solvency Indicators - Revenue (medians), by jurisdiction type and year

	Median property tax share of general fund revenue		Median revenue sharing as a share of general fund revenue		Median charges as a share of general fund revenue	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Counties	0.584	0.580	0.055	0.052	0.113	0.108
Cities	0.504	0.520	0.155	0.166	0.075	0.078
Villages	0.450	0.427	0.220	0.236	0.039	0.053
Townships	0.323	0.296	0.438	0.460	0.026	0.026

Table 7 shows median property taxes as a percentage of general fund revenue for each jurisdiction type, and Figure 6 shows the full distributions. Compared to other jurisdiction types, counties are typically most reliant on property taxes. For the median county, about 58% of general fund revenue comes from property taxes, with most counties in the 40 to 70% range.

Cities have the next highest reliance on property taxes at a median of 50 to 52%, with villages slightly lower at 43 to 45%. Both cities and villages have wide ranges of dependence on property taxes, with some jurisdictions near 80% and others at 20% or lower. For townships, while the median reliance on property taxes is for about 30% of general fund revenue, the distribution is notably right-skewed, with 12% of townships reliant on property taxes for majorities of their general fund revenues.

Reliance on Revenue Sharing

The next most important source of revenue for Michigan local governments is state revenue sharing, in which a portion of state sales tax collections are redistributed back to local governments largely on a per capita basis as unrestricted aid.²⁷ All else being equal, more unrestricted revenue can help support services, but local governments should not be too dependent on state aid because they have no control over the payments. Not only are revenue sharing payments subject to volatile sales tax collections, but for cities, villages, and townships they are also dependent on legislative discretion to make annual statutory appropriations. Since 2002, annual State appropriations have fallen short of “full funding”, resulting in the loss of an estimated \$8.6 billion for cities, villages, and townships.²⁸

Table 7 shows median revenue sharing as a percentage of general fund revenues for each jurisdiction type. At the median, townships are most reliant on revenue sharing, accounting for about 46% of general fund revenues, while counties are the least reliant at only about 5%. For the median city, about 15 to 16% of general fund revenues come from revenue sharing, and for the median village, it is slightly higher at 22 to 23%.

Local government officials say:

Many of Michigan's largest local governments say they are spending ARPA funds on public safety. As of Spring 2023, jurisdictions with the largest populations were significantly more likely to report spending some of their ARPA funding on public safety projects compared to those from smaller communities.²⁵ For example, officials from 46% of jurisdictions with more than 30,000 residents, as well as 42% of those with 10,001-30,000 residents reported spending some of their ARPA funding on public safety projects. In contrast, only 18% of jurisdictions with populations less than 1,500 planned to spend ARPA funds on public safety.



Figure 6
Property tax revenue as a percentage of general fund revenue, by jurisdiction type

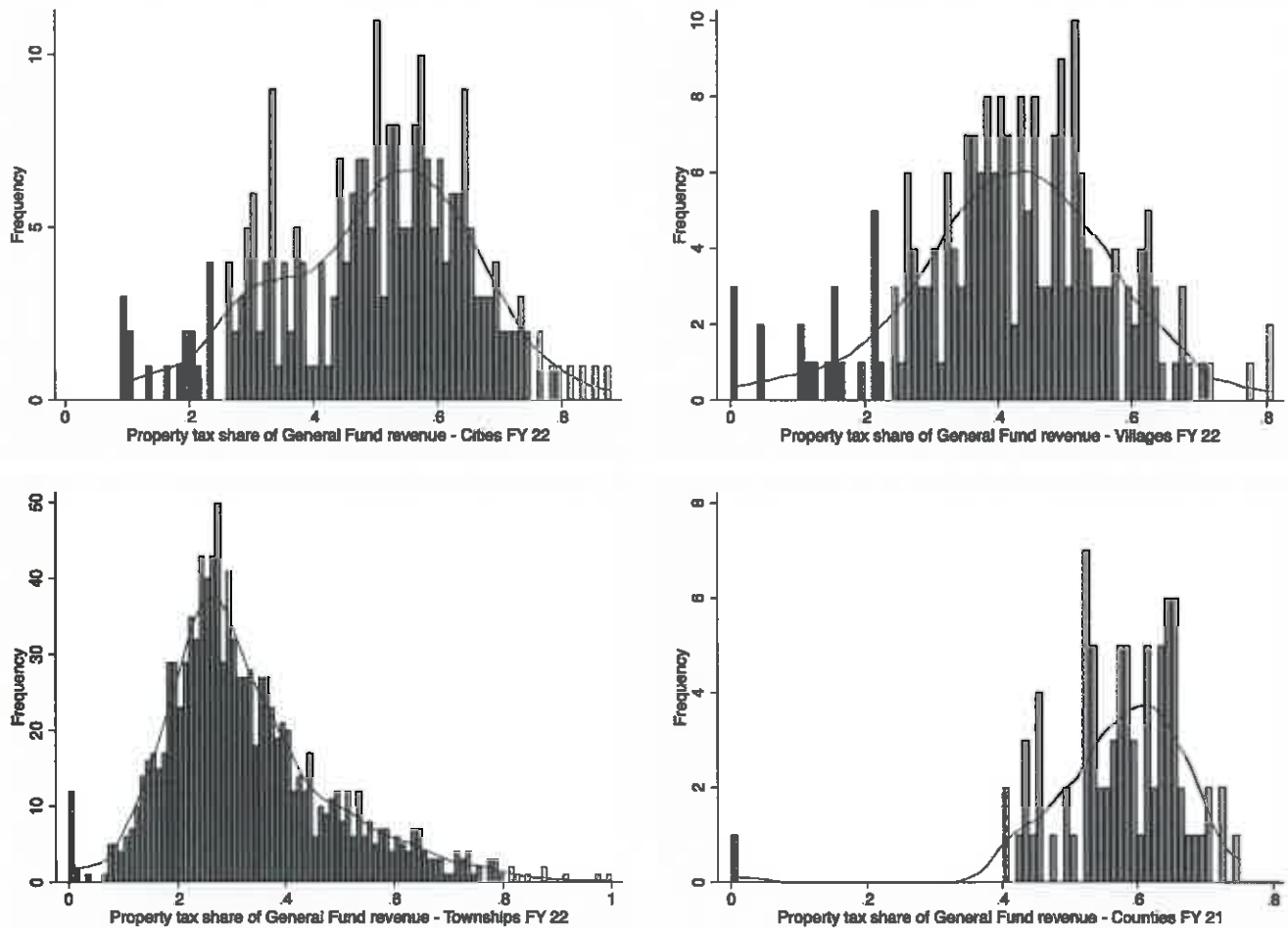
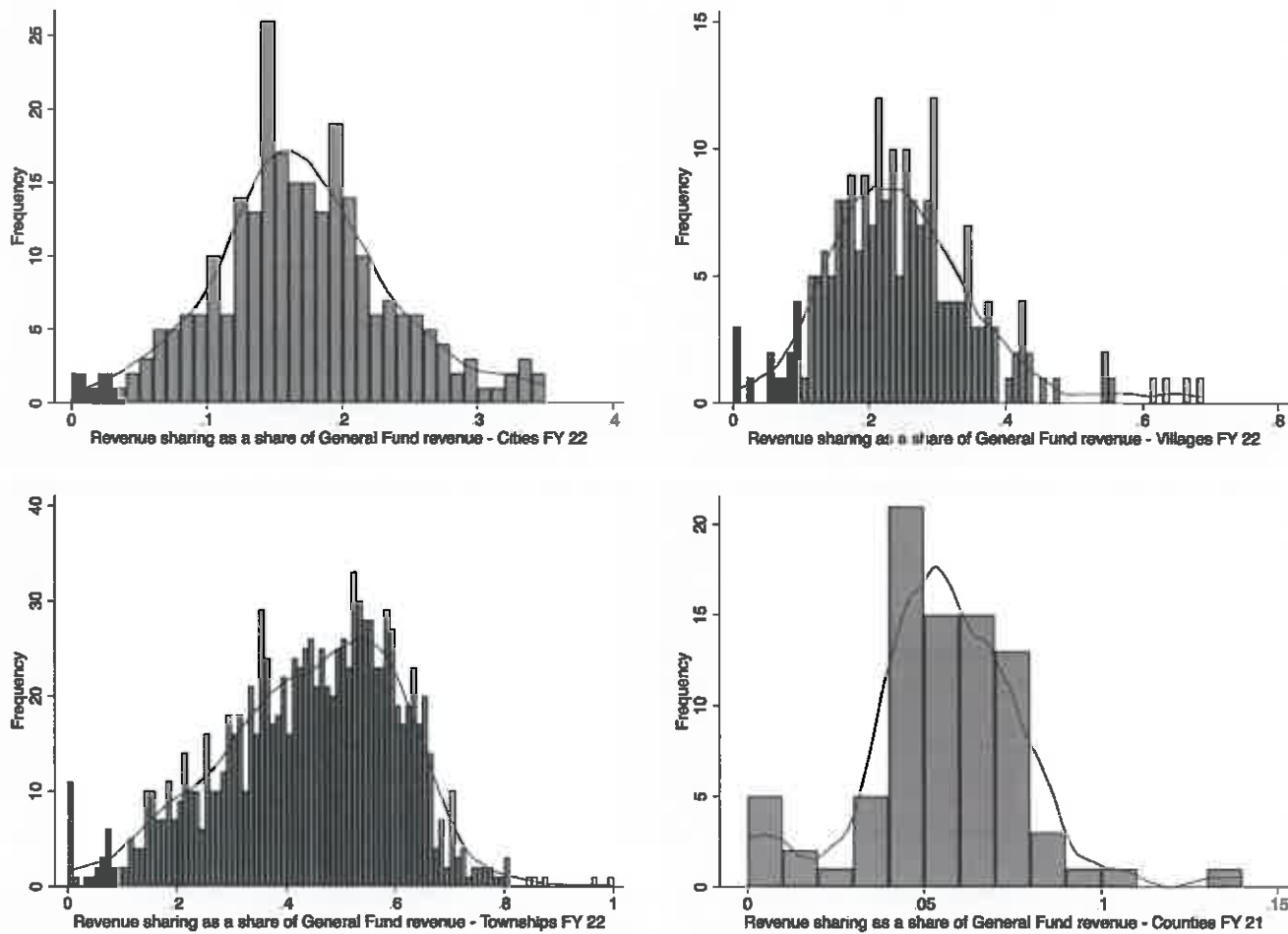


Figure 7 gives more detail on the wide variability in how much different jurisdictions depend on revenue sharing. The distribution for townships is left-skewed, meaning that while there are many townships with low to medium reliance on revenue sharing, almost 8% (representing 83 townships) exceed 65%. The distributions for cities and villages are similar, with most jurisdictions in the zero to 40% range, but a handful of villages are highly reliant on revenue sharing. Reliance on revenue sharing is quite low for all counties.

Figure 7
Revenue sharing as a percentage of general fund revenues, by jurisdiction type



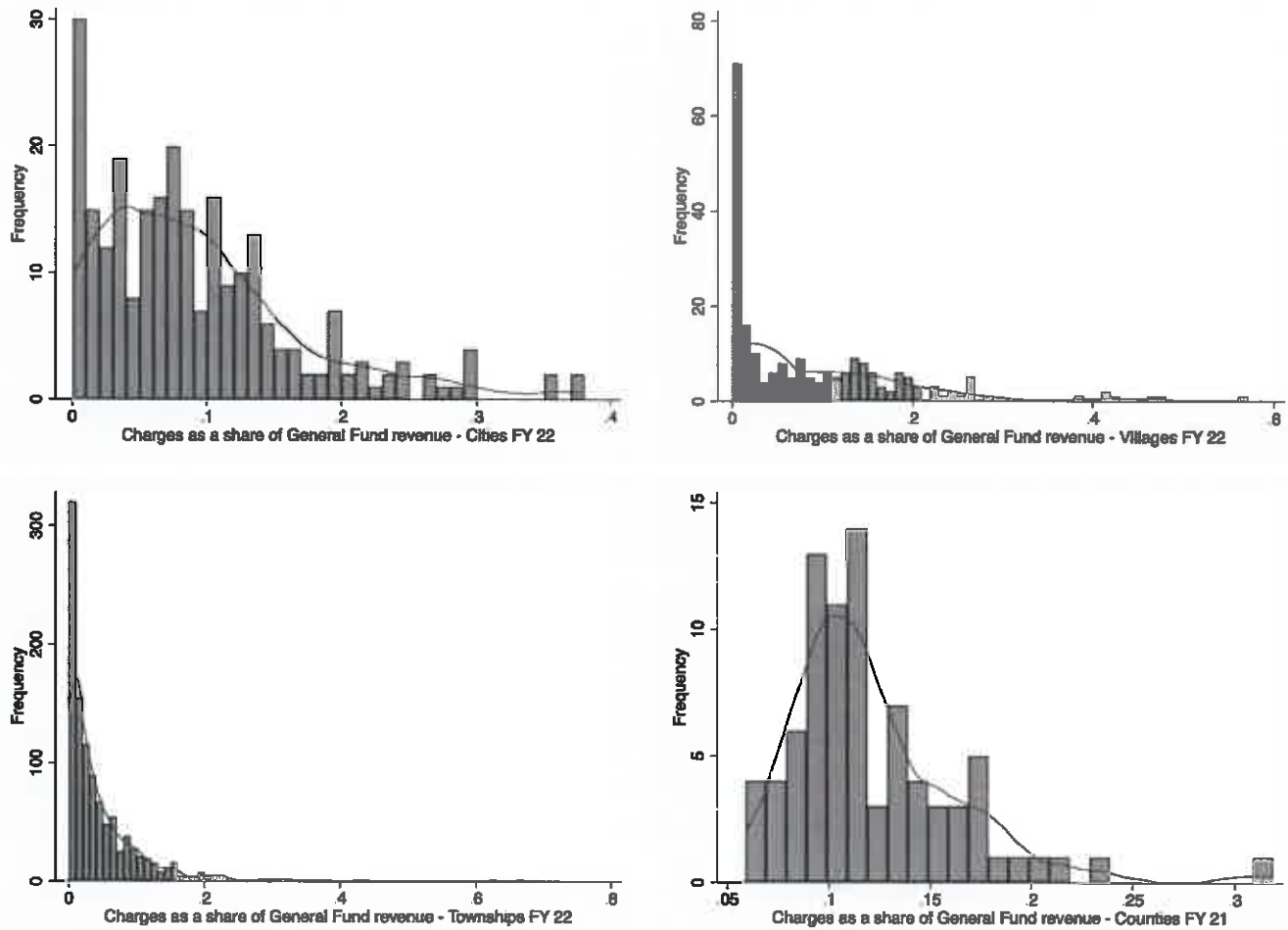
Reliance on Charges

Governments often charge fees for specific types of services like permits, parks, and courts. According to the *Bolt* decision, fees must be voluntary, proportionate to the cost of providing services, and serve a regulatory rather than revenue-raising purpose.²⁹ While fees can be an important revenue source for local governments, high reliance on fees might suggest that jurisdictions are struggling to raise enough from general revenue sources (e.g. property taxes), looking to fees as an alternative. In addition, reliance on fees can present equity concerns because fees tend to be regressive, falling more heavily on lower-income residents and requiring careful consideration to ensure vulnerable populations are not given an unfair burden.

General fund reliance on charges by jurisdiction type is shown in *Table 7*. Counties have the highest reliance on charges and fees at 10 to 11% at the median. Counties' higher reliance on fees is likely attributable to the types of services they provide. Clerks, courts, and medical services, for example, usually operate on a fee-based structure. Other jurisdiction types typically rely on fees for less than 10% of revenues, with the median city at 7.5 – 7.8%, the median village at 3.9 – 5.3%, and the median township at about 2.6%.



Figure 8
Revenue from charges and fees as a percentage of total revenues, by jurisdiction type



While reliance on charges and fees is reassuringly low for most local governments, a closer look at the distribution of values for this ratio shows that there are some outlier jurisdictions – particularly among cities (25) and villages (29) – that rely on charges and fees for more than a quarter of their general fund revenues (see Figure 8). Further investigation may be warranted to determine whether these jurisdictions are overly reliant on charges and fees.

Overall Service Solvency

While it is difficult to tell from financial data how well Michigan local governments are able to meet the service needs of their communities, it is clear that there is a lot of variation in both how much jurisdictions are spending and how they are relying on resources to support that spending. Rather than relying on specified benchmarks, it may be more useful for local governments to use these service solvency indicators to compare themselves to their peers. For example, a community that emphasizes the importance of public safety spending may want to check that it is above the median in public safety spending as a share of the general fund.

It is also important to interpret indicators of service solvency in the context of other indicators of fiscal health. In the absence of other signs of fiscal stress, high expenditures per capita may be a signal of a healthy community successfully meeting a high-level of service demand. However, if a local government is experiencing fiscal stress, high expenditures per capita (especially if coupled with high reliance on fines/fees) may be a signal that the local government is on an unsustainable path.

Key findings:

- Cities – especially larger cities – have the highest service-related expenditures per capita.
- Larger cities are spending a larger portion of their budgets on public safety.
- Most counties and cities rely on property taxes for at least half of their revenues.
- State revenue sharing makes up almost half of township revenues, raising concerns about over-reliance on a sometimes volatile source of funding.

Local government officials say:

In both 2022 and 2023, almost one third of Michigan local governments reported plans to increase charges for fees and licenses. This expectation was most common in cities, where 52% projected an increase in FY 2024 compared to FY 2023, although very few (2%) projected a significant increase in charges and fees.³⁰



Conclusion

Overall, financial indicators show a mixed picture of the fiscal health of Michigan's local governments. Measures of cash and budgetary solvency are currently healthy for most jurisdictions. However, this is an area where ARPA funding was particularly beneficial and it is unclear whether federal aid will have lasting benefits for local government fiscal health. It will be important to monitor these indicators as pandemic aid is spent down and leaders hope for continued low inflation and favorable economic conditions.

Meanwhile, the long-term situation is more mixed. Local governments do not generally have much flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, and many are still struggling from the Great Recession and other past challenges. Pension and OPEB obligations continue to be a challenge for many local governments, and the size of these burdens is partially affected by factors outside local governments' control. Policymakers should pay careful attention to the fixed costs of debt service and pension and OPEB expenses to ensure that they do not overwhelm local government budgets and crowd out their ability to provide services to residents.

Reliance on heavily-constrained revenue sources like property taxes and state revenue sharing leave local leaders with little autonomy to adjust their revenue policies in accordance with resident service demands or community goals. Therefore, differences between local jurisdictions' ability to provide services will continue to be driven mainly by underlying trends in population (for revenue sharing) and tax base growth (for property taxes), which local officials have only marginal ability to influence.

Overall, it appears that the recent federal aid and better-than-expected economic resilience have successfully supported the cash and budgetary solvency of most Michigan local governments. Looking forward, however, there is a significant amount of uncertainty, and many local leaders have expressed apprehension about declining fiscal health. Efforts at ongoing monitoring and proactive assistance to local governments will be essential to ensure that Michigan residents can continue to rely on local services.

Local government officials say:

On the Michigan Public Policy Survey, local officials are consistently more likely to predict higher levels of fiscal stress five years down the road, compared to during the current fiscal year, and this trend has worsened over the last two years. Despite short term boosts to fiscal health from ARPA, only half of jurisdictions statewide (52%) expect low fiscal stress in 2028, while 38% expect medium (25%) or high (13%) stress, a record high.²³

Acknowledgements

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The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP), housed at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, conducts and supports applied policy research designed to inform state, local, and urban policy issues. Through integrated research, teaching, and outreach involving academic researchers, students, policymakers and practitioners, CLOSUP seeks to foster understanding of today's state and local policy problems, and to find effective solutions to those problems.

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