



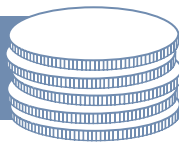
Ottawa County Treasurer's

ANNUAL REPORT

Amanda Price, Treasurer | January 2021



Ottawa County
Where You Belong



JANUARY 2021

Ottawa County Board of Commission Members,

The mission of the Treasurer’s office is to administer all roles and duties in a professional, effective, and responsive manner, thereby assuring confidence that both sound management and the best interests of the public are of foremost importance in the Treasurer’s office. In the Treasurer’s office, we live this mission each day.

Overview

The majority of the work done by the Treasurer’s office is mandated by Michigan law. However, service levels are not mandated and excellent customer service can only be provided by our office if supported by the County Board of Commissioners and the Administration.

This annual report presents data and information for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. It can be broadly broken down by *“Dollars, Delinquencies, and Dogs.”*

2019-2020 Initiatives

- **IMPLEMENTATION** of Check Scanners at Grand Haven and Fillmore offices
- **IMPLEMENTATION** of Smart Safe at Grand Haven and Fillmore offices
- **RECONFIGURATION** of Fillmore offices to improve staff safety
- **ISSUE** RFP for Single Vendor Credit Card Processing
- **EXPLORE** alternate payment methods for witness and Juror Fees
- **PLAN** for New Cashiering Upgrade
- **ISSUE** RFP for financial advisor



Exploring

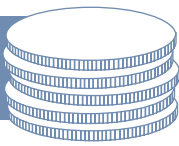
Exploring

Exploring

On hold due to COVID

Amanda Price

Ottawa County Treasurer



In accordance with **Public Act 40 of 1932**, and by board resolution, the Office of the County Treasurer is the depository for all county funds.

Fund management activities include receipting for revenues; coordinating cash drawer and imprest cash for all departments; reconciling receivables; coordinating disbursement of funds held in trust; and coordinating signatures on and transfer of fund to cover county disbursements.

Striking

Each year, the Treasurer along with Corporate Counsel, assist the local units of government in “striking” Personal Property taxes that have been delinquent more than five years and are uncollectable. In 2020, the Treasurer’s office helped 13 local units of government strike **\$3,113.51** uncollectable personal property taxes from their rolls. For each unit that participates in this joint filing, there is a direct reduction in that municipality’s legal expenses.

Escheats

Checks that remain un-cashed for over one year must be escheated to the State of Michigan. Under recent changes in state law, we now retain and must account for all unclaimed checks under \$25. In Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the checks were reissued and, therefore, there were no escheated checks.

County Funds at a glance

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Depository Accounts			
Accounts	29	23	20
Bank Charges	\$7,669.29	\$12,373	\$9,488

Uncollected Delinquent Personal Property

County Tax	\$26,502	\$29,496	\$33,511.38
Parks Tax	\$2,652	\$3,959	\$3,321.16
E 911 Tax	\$3,645	\$2,918	\$4,475.86
Roads	\$2,009	\$3,139	\$44,115.16
CMH	\$918	\$1,611	\$2,221.71

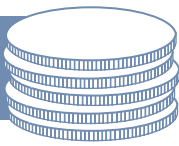
Taxes Stricken from Taxes Receivable

# of Local GU	15	16	13
# of Parcels	100	129	72
Total \$	\$12,198.25	\$29,663.89	\$3,113.51

Unclaimed Checks – Escheated to State

# of Checks	57*	-	50
Total \$	\$9,408.09 *	-	\$4,444.81
Not Cashed			
under \$25	\$1,473.41*	-	\$510.67

* No checks were escheated. All stale checks were re-issued.



Cash and investment activities for the 12 months ending September 30, 2021, are discussed with this portion of the report and cover only the operations of the county that fall under the direct responsibility of the County Board of Commissioners.

The information on this page does not include the operations of the Ottawa County Insurance Authority, Ottawa County Building Authority, the Ottawa County Road Commission, the OPEB Trust, the Ottawa County Land Bank Authority or certain activities of the Water Resources Commissioner, unless identified specifically.

The primary objectives of the County’s investment activities (in priority order) are:

- 1) Protection of principal
- 2) Liquidity
- 3) Return on Investments

The investment activity throughout the year – and on September 30 – complies with the Ottawa County Investment Policy.

The total Year-To-Date return for 2020 was 2.43%, which compares with a 2020 Benchmark blended index earning of .273% (using 2/3 Barclay’s 1-5-year Government Index blended with 1/3 S&P 0-3-month T-Bill Index). The 5-year average total return on the county’s investments was 1.8%, as compared to 1.8% for the 5-year CPI average.

On September 30, 2020, approximately \$33.8 million of the Portfolio was laddered over a five-year period with a weighted average maturity of .5863 years. We will continue to ladder while investing to take advantage of the yield curve whenever possible.

Invested Balanced September 30, 2020

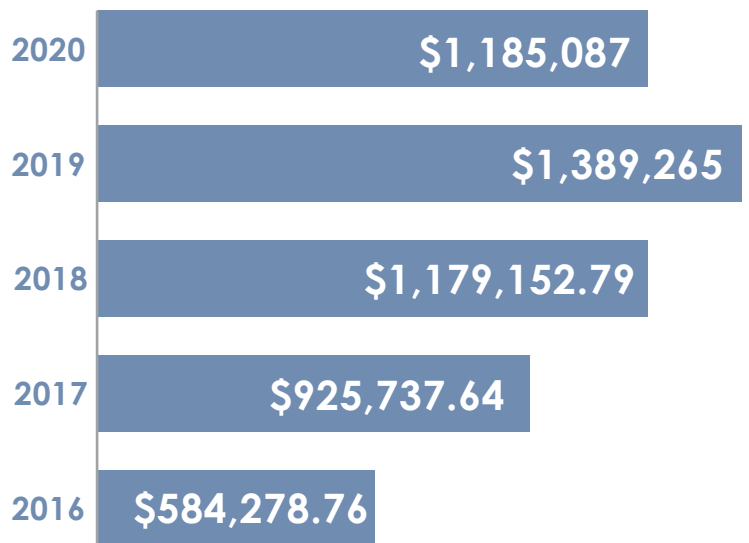
\$129,160,579	Par Value
\$130,639,597	Market Value

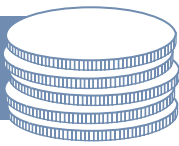
\$794,235	Accumulated change in fair market value
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Total Return Rate (net)

2020	2.438%
2019	3.811%
2018	0.480%
2017	0.383%
2016	1.988%
5-year average	1.820%

Annual Interest Earned





The collection of Summer and Winter Property Taxes is the responsibility of our local units of government.

Throughout the year, the Treasurer’s Office assists local government assessors and treasurers by verifying tax roll calculations prior to the bills being mailed to taxpayers. Local units electronically transfer their tax rolls to Ottawa County a minimum of three times during the tax year so that the tax roll totals can be verified making the March 1 settlement a much smoother process.

The State of Michigan relies on the Treasurer’s office to coordinate collection and provide accountability for the **State Education Tax (SET)**, which is billed and collected by the local units. The offset to this workload is that the investment interested earnings on the SET levy can be retained by the County.

The current year tax rolls are turned over to the County Treasurer’s office by the local units of government on March 1 of each year. A settlement process occurs during the month of March which consists of verifying the taxes billed and adjusted as well as delinquent tax rolls.

As a result of this process, the delinquent tax rolls are “purchased” using the county’s **Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund**, which makes the local unit whole. The Treasurer’s



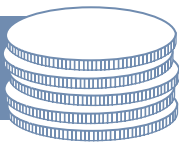
office has done an estimate of cash available each April 1 through 2027 to determine if there is a need to bond for these payments.

Electronic settlement with the local units saves hours of staff time for the both the County Treasurer’s

office and the local unit treasurers. The county website provides historical tax data online.

Tax rolls for 2004 through 2020 are saved electronically eliminating paper tax rolls and reducing physical vault storage capacity needs.

REAL TAXES RETURNED DELINQUENT



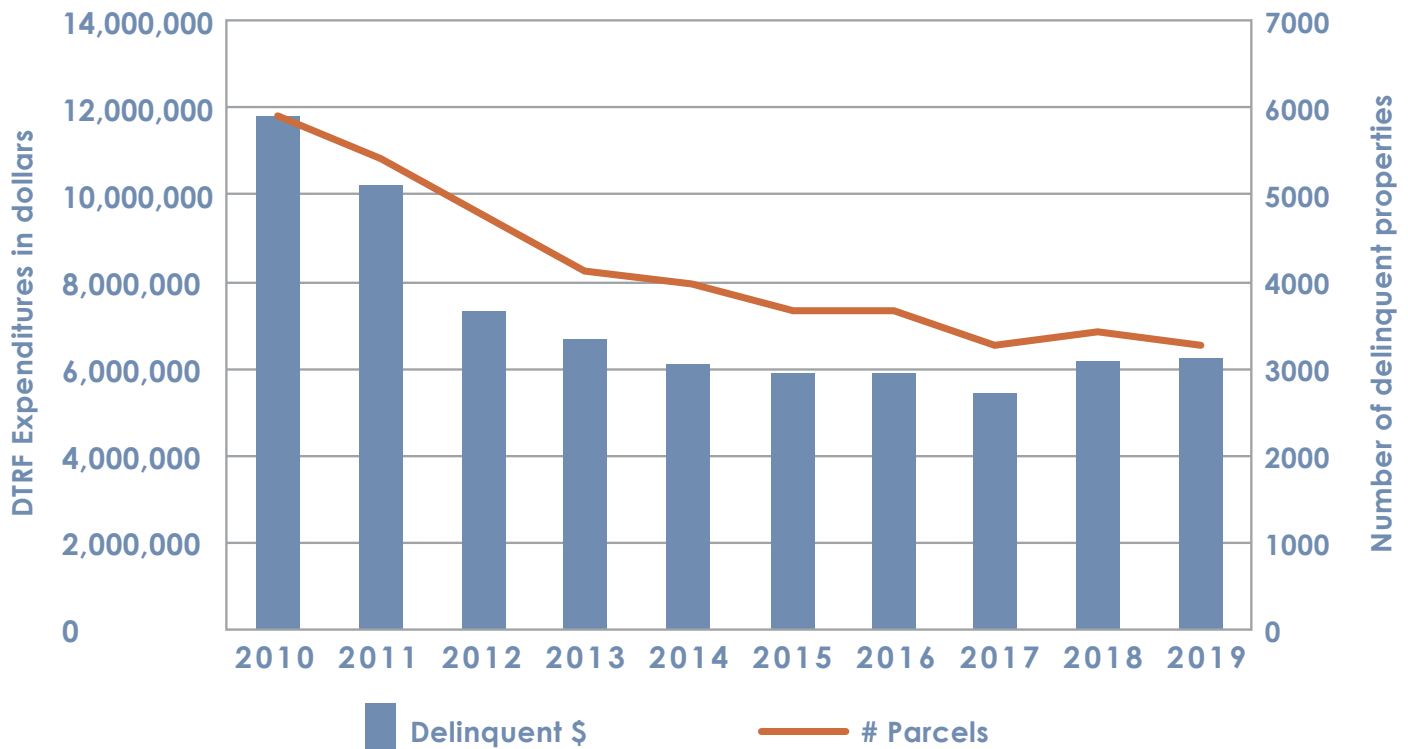
The County operates a **Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund (DTRF)** from which the County pays all other taxing authorities their portion of delinquent property taxes as settled on **March 1** of each year. The payments are distributed to the local units around **April 8**.

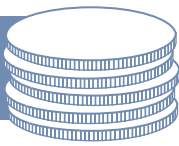
By maintaining the DTRF, Ottawa County is not forced to borrow to reimburse the local units. The DTRF has become one of the financing tools of the county.

The graph below shows the volume of delinquent parcels and the total dollars necessary in each year to “purchase” the delinquent taxes.



Historical Delinquent Dollars and Delinquent Parcels





It is the responsibility of the County Treasurer to collect the delinquent real property taxes.

Functions associated with delinquent taxes include:

- **Writing receipts**
- **Processing tax roll adjustment to prior years tax rolls (for up to 20 years)**
- **Processing bankruptcy claims**
- **Managing the annual forfeiture and foreclosure process**
- **Acting as Foreclosing Governmental Unit**

Although our office is charged with the collection of delinquent property taxes, we view our job as assisting taxpayers with the payment of their taxes.

Our goal is to reduce the number of foreclosures as much as possible. We assist taxpayers by:

- **Meeting with them to discuss their financial situation**
- **Developing payment plans**

Delinquent Property Taxes at a Glance

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Real Taxes Returned Delinquent			
No. of Properties	3,276	3,439	3,261
Dollars in Millions	\$5,441,612.00	\$6,191,820.00	\$6,229,975.68
Forfeited and Foreclosed			
Certified Mail Count	2138	2317	2232
Property Forfeited	427	411	410
Property Foreclosed	17	13	7
Financial Hardship Given	23	24	20
Tax Collections			
Receipts Written	4635	4703	4888
Dollars in Millions	\$6.50	\$6.70	\$7.70
Interest & Fees	\$916,963	\$901,963	\$1,025,116
Tax Roll Adjustments			
No. Processed	503	446	605
Foreclosed Land Sale in 2020			
Proceeds from Sale	\$62,300.00	\$233,580.19	\$7,800
Total Tax, Fees & Interest Billed	-15,085.62	-37,535.97	-5,369.77
Less charge Back to Tax Units	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Gain (Loss) on 2020 Land Sales	\$47,218.38	\$196,044.22	\$2,430.23

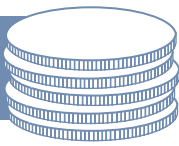
- **Referring them to local and state resources that could assist with taxes**
- **Instituting monthly ACH withdrawals from checking accounts**
- **Use of Hardship Deferral***

* In 2019, we used the deferral to protect 24 property and in 2020 we used the deferral to protect 20 properties.

Seven properties were foreclosed on April 1, 2020.

These seven parcels were either vacant land or gap parcels and all but one was sold at auction.

The remaining property was land-locked and not purchased by the adjacent landowner.



The Ottawa County Landbank Authority (LBA) was formed in 2010. The original steering committee determined it was important for the private sector to take the lead on the property development as much as possible, so the LBA seeks only to acquire tax foreclosed properties if they remain unsold after both property tax auctions.

The purchase and anticipated changes to these properties will reset the property values thereby bringing additional tax revenue to the community. These are the type of results that the LBA was established to produce.

All ongoing support to accomplish the work of the LBA is provided by the County Treasurer’s office, other than legal assistance being provided by the County’s Corporate Counsel.

The LBA does not have taxing authority and was established with its only funding stream coming from property sale transactions.

2020 data and financial information is below:

- No new properties were added and none sold.
- One property is held by the Land Bank. The property is in Holland Township and is 8.6 feet wide by 139 feet long

Ottawa County Land Bank Authority finances

	2020 Actual
REVENUE	
Tax Capture	\$ -
Sale of Property	\$ -
TOTAL REVENUE	
EXPENSES	
Legal Services	\$ -
Administrative Expense	\$ -
Dues & Memberships	\$ 125.00
Mileage	\$ -
Conference	\$ -
Project Cost Incentive Grant	\$ -
TOTAL EXPENSES	
NET	
Prior Year End Fund Balance	\$49,305.77
YEAR-END FUND BALANCE	\$49,180.77

Ottawa County Land Bank Authority Board Members

Amanda Price

County Treasurer, (by statute), Chair

Rebecca Hopp

Ferrysburg Mayor, Vice-chair

Joshua Westgate

Wright Township, Supervisor, Secretary

Tim Maday

City of Zeeland, Treasurer

Randy Meppelink

County Commissioner, Appointed County Member

Amanda Murray

Ottawa County EDC Member

Glenn Nykamp

Zeeland Township Supervisor, Township Member

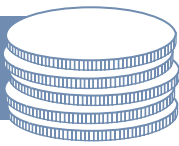
Alan Vanderberg

County Administrator, Appointed County Member

Dale Wyngarden

Citizen Member

DOG AND KENNEL LICENSE PROGRAM

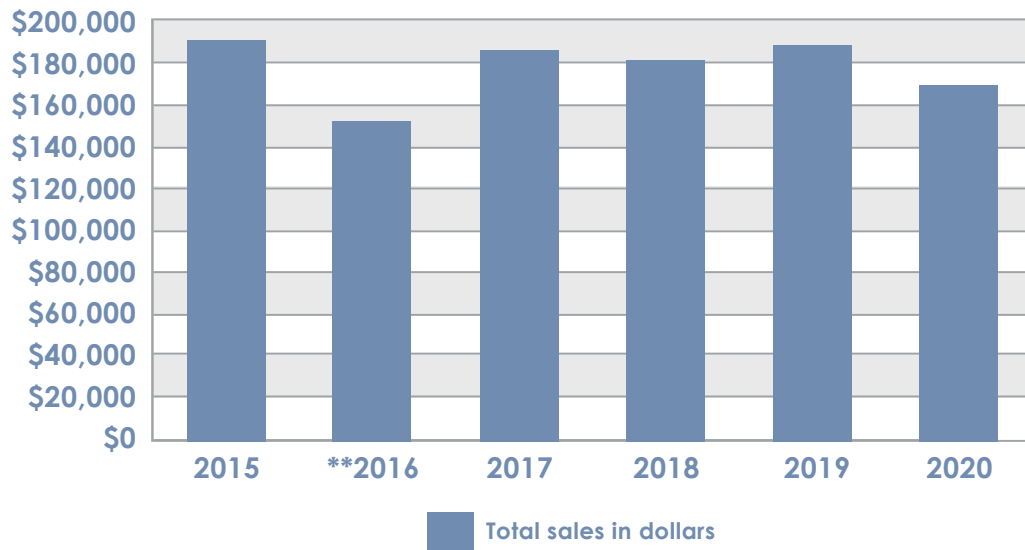


The County Treasurer’s Office manages the dog and kennel license program for the County. Ottawa County sells both one year and three-year licenses on a year-round basis. Fees for yearly dog licenses are:

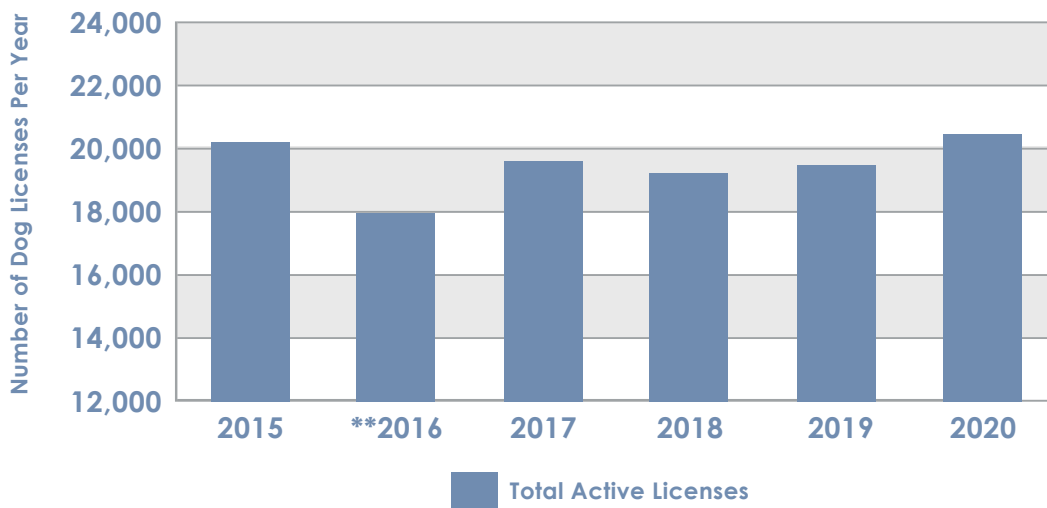
- **\$25 male or female**
- **\$10 for spay or neutered dogs**
- **\$10 for puppies 7 months or younger**

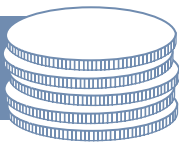
In 2018, the Animal Ordinance was updated and now reports most violations as civil infractions versus misdemeanors which allows animal control officers to write tickets without concern of creating a criminal record for the owner.

Dog License Sale Revenues



Total Active Dog Licenses in Each Year





2020 DOG DATA

TOP BREEDS

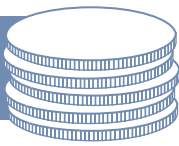
- 1** Labrador Retriever
1,090
- 2** Golden Retriever
523
- 3** German Shepherd
376

TOP NAMES

- 1** Bella
120
- 2** Charlie
101
- 3** Bailey
92



Rocky (left) with pal Remi at Kirk Park.



PROPERTY TAX SEARCH

A tax search is a **documented, paid tax status verification** from the Ottawa County Treasurer’s Office.

The verification may be of delinquent tax status, historical tax roll amounts (including if paid or not) and legal descriptions. Tax searches are also performed for warranty deed certification. A legislative change in 2016 increased the price for certifying deeds and revenue has seen a jump in fee income since that year. The new fee is a minimum of \$5 for up to 25 deeds.

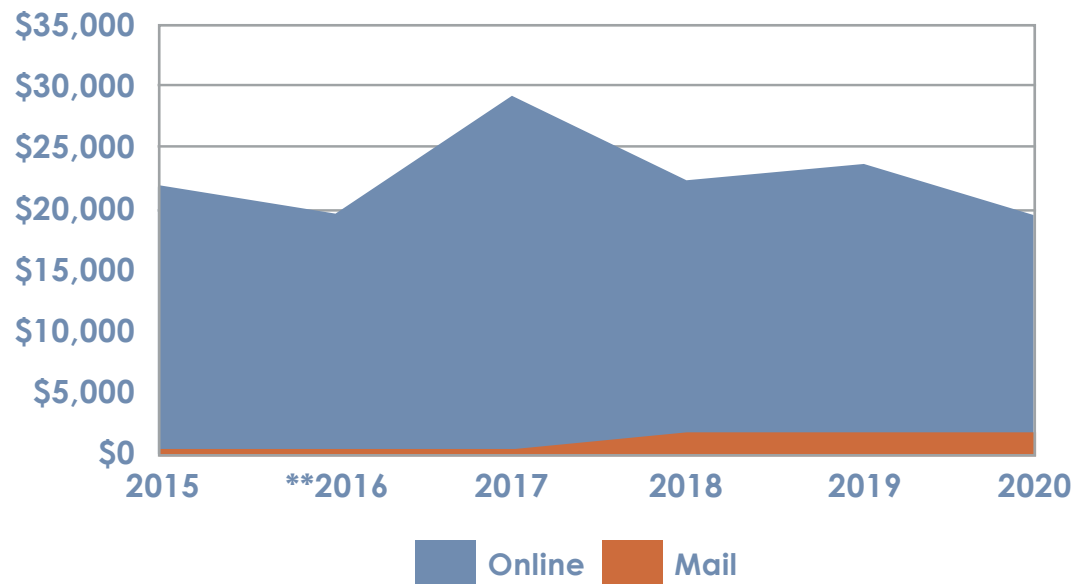
Tax search requests are received via U.S. Postal Service or the county’s website. The fee is set by State statute at a maximum of 50 cents per parcel/year. Through the online search service, customers are able to verify the property information and then obtain written documentation for delinquent and paid taxes 24 hours a day/365 days per year.

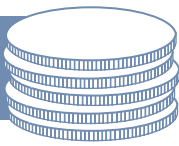
Public terminals are available at both the Fillmore and Grand Haven offices for individuals to do their own searches and at no charge.

Tax searches are also performed for Warranty Deed Certification. A 2016 legislative change increased the price for certifying deeds and our revenue saw a significant increase in fee income. The new fee set by State statute is a minimum of \$5 for up to 25 deeds.

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Certification Revenue			
Deed Certification	\$38,368	\$36,056	\$31,271
Tax Search Revenue			
Mail Searches	\$1,732	\$1,787	\$2,002
Business On-line Search	\$16,190	\$17,192	\$13,903
Personal On-line Search	\$3,995	\$4,295	\$3,108
Total Search \$	\$21,917	\$23,274.00	\$19,013
Online Utilization	92%	92%	89%

Annual revenue





The Treasurer’s Office is the designated collection office for the Bureau. The Bureau processes violation tickets issued by:

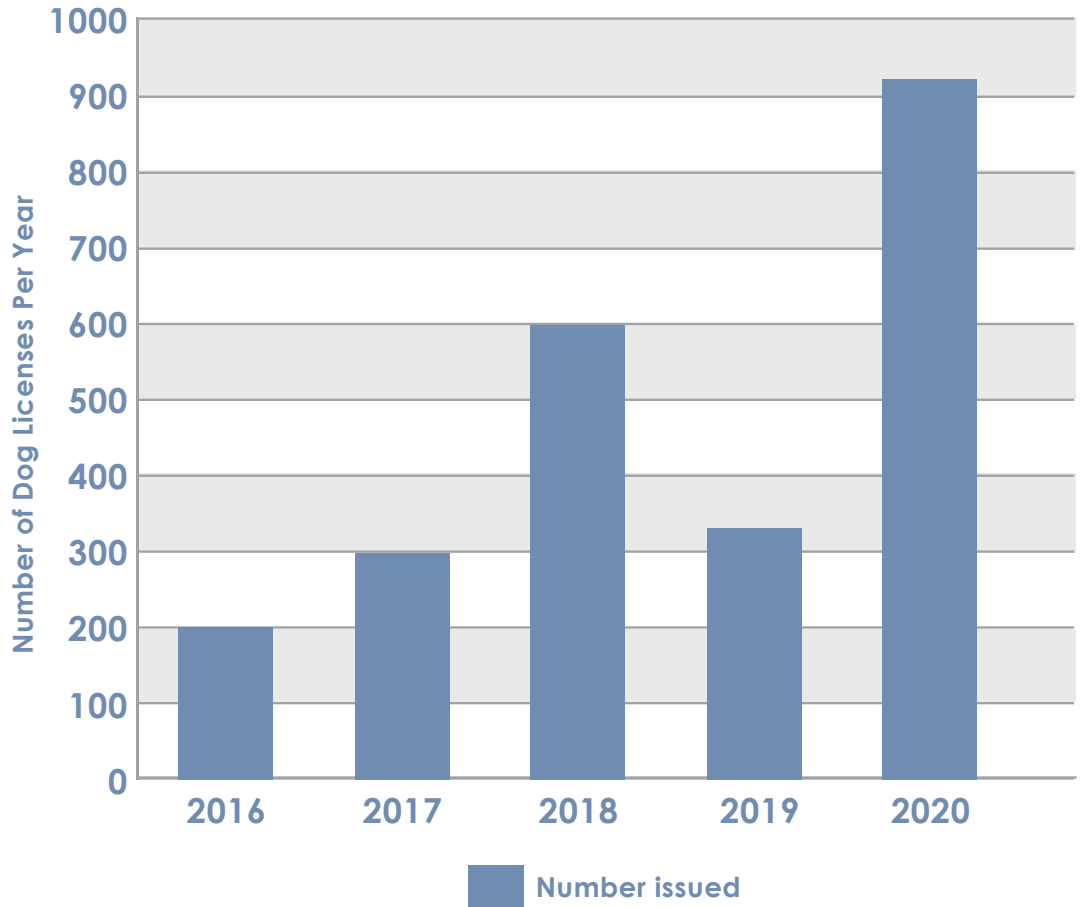
- **County Parks Department**
- **County Water Resources Commission**
- **Environmental Health**
- **Sheriff’s Animal Control Officers**

The fines are established by County Ordinance and any fines not paid are turned over to District Court to The Municipal Civil Infraction Bureau was established by the Board of Commissions in 1995. The County be processed as any other citation in the court.

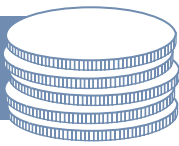
Beginning in 2013, the Parks Department issued a notice that a citation could be voided if a county Parks Pass was purchased within two weeks of the citation

Fiscal Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Citations Disposition				
Issued	300	604	328	934
Paid In Person \$ Collected	130 \$9,993	170 \$9,237	183 \$10,734	117 \$7,228
Paid Online \$ Collected	71 \$2,869	247 \$10,138	112 \$5,521	395 \$17,611
Total Revenue	\$12,862	\$19,375	\$16,225	\$24,839
To District Court Dismissed	73 1	142 -	9 1	132 61
Pending	28	5	-	-

Citations issued



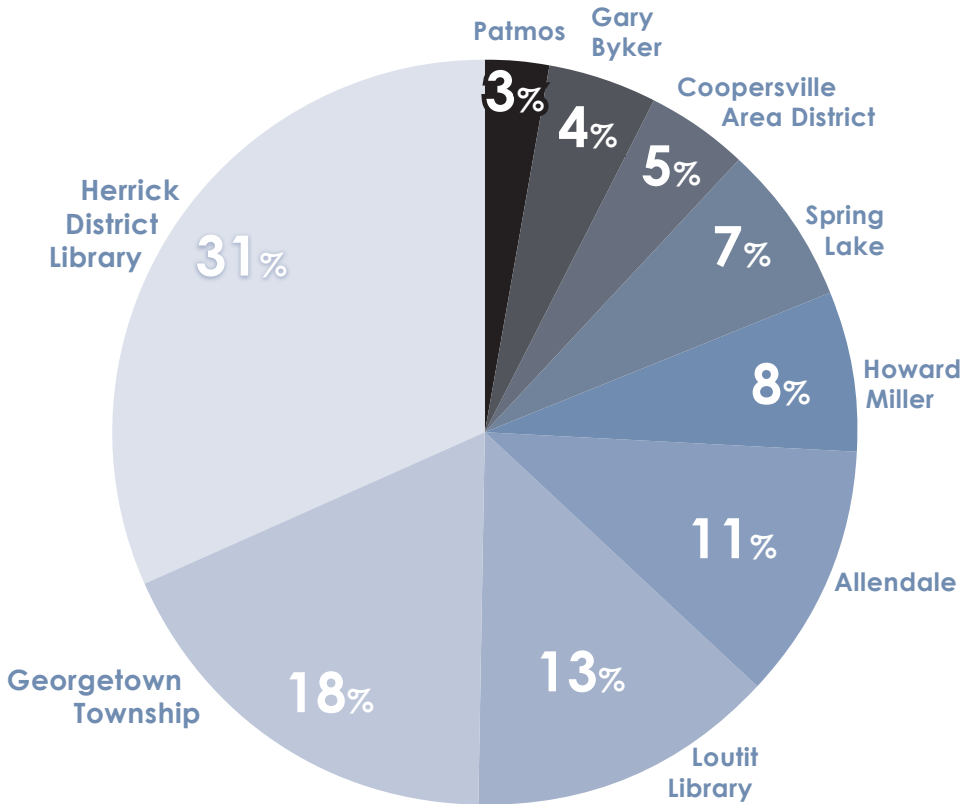
LIBRARY PENAL FINES



Public Act 59 of 1964 established the Penal Fine distribution system which supports public libraries. This law also established the collection and distribution of penal fines based on population of the jurisdiction the local library services.

Ottawa County has nine public libraries: Allendale, Coopersville, Georgetown Township, Patmos (Jamestown), Herrick District (Holland), Gary Byker Memorial (Hudsonville), Loutit District (Grand Haven), Spring Lake District, and Howard Miller (Zeeland).

Ottawa County 2019-2020 Penal Fine Distribution

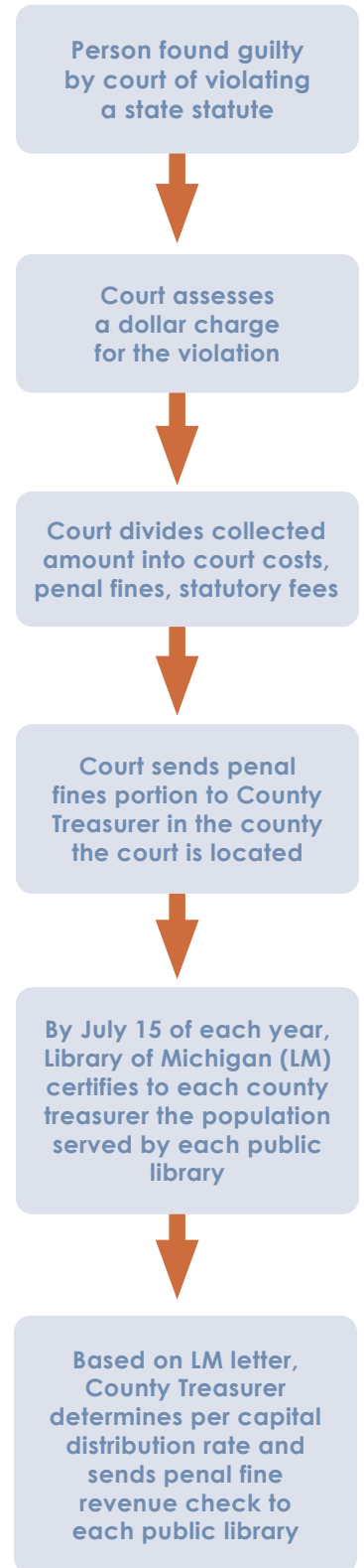


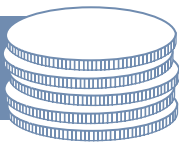
The County Treasurer’s office receives the penal fines throughout the year. In July, the Library of Michigan sends out a listing of the eligible libraries and associated populations, and the County Treasurer’s office disburses the collected penal fine funds to each library. In recent years, the penal fines distribution total has ranged from **\$700,000 to over \$920,000**. In 2019, the total distributed was **\$849,762.93** and in 2020 the distribution amount totals **\$755,171.24**, which is likely due to fewer penal fines being written during COVID shut-downs.

Fine Distribution by Library

Allendale Township	\$80,964.48
Coopersville Area District	\$33,956.82
Georgetown Township	\$134,501.84
Patmos (Jamestown)	\$20,135.91
Herrick District	\$236,853.21
Gary Byker Memorial	\$31,440.54
Loutit District	\$101,738.76
Spring Lake District	\$52,272.07
Howard Miller	\$63,307.61
TOTAL	\$755,171.24

Life of a Penal Fine





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Remodel a portion of our vault area into a conference room with an entrance outside of our main office thus eliminating access to the interior of the Treasurer's main office. This is a priority to ensure the safety of the staff.

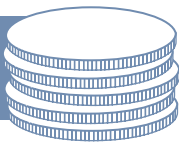
Study and implement Public Acts 255 and 256 as they pertain to foreclosures in Ottawa County. These two bills are the legislative fixes to the Rafaeli decision by the Michigan Supreme Court.



Cashiering Software Upgrade

Make it through COVID-19!





QUESTIONS?