

Ottawa County Treasurer's

# Annual

# Report

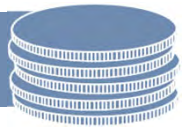


Ottawa County



**Amanda Price, Treasurer**

**January 2023**



## JANUARY 2023

### 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, we live this mission each day.

### Overview

A vast majority of the work done by the Treasurer’s office is mandated by Michigan law. However, service levels are not mandated. 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 2021-2022 fiscal year. It can be broadly broken into three categories: **"Dollars, Delinquencies, and Dogs."**

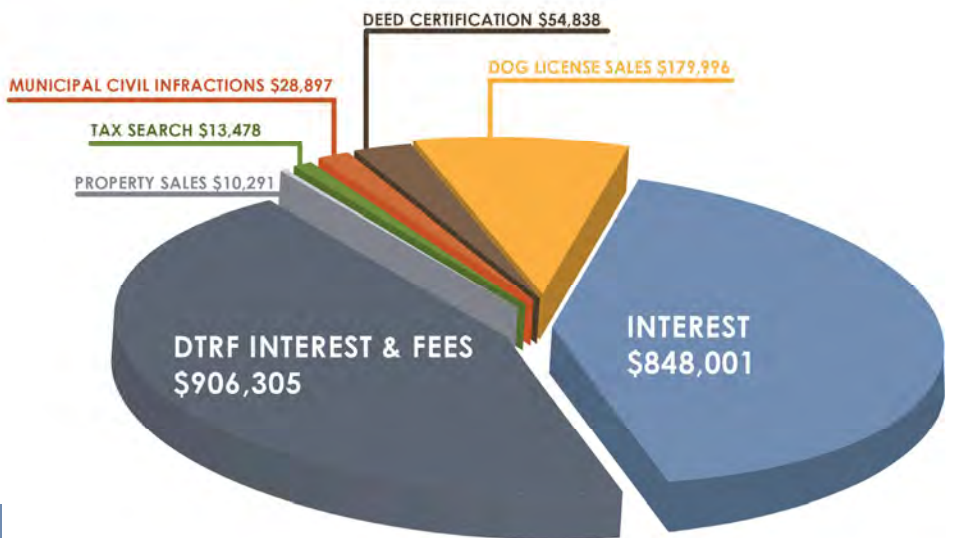
### 2021-2022 Accomplishments

- OPEB Trust was amended via a Trust Restatement and approved by the Board of Commissioners
- OPEB Trust Investment Policy was updated
- RFP for OPEB Trust Investment Advisor was released and contract was awarded
- RFP for County-wide Credit Card Processor was released and contract was awarded

**Amanda Price**  
Ottawa County Treasurer

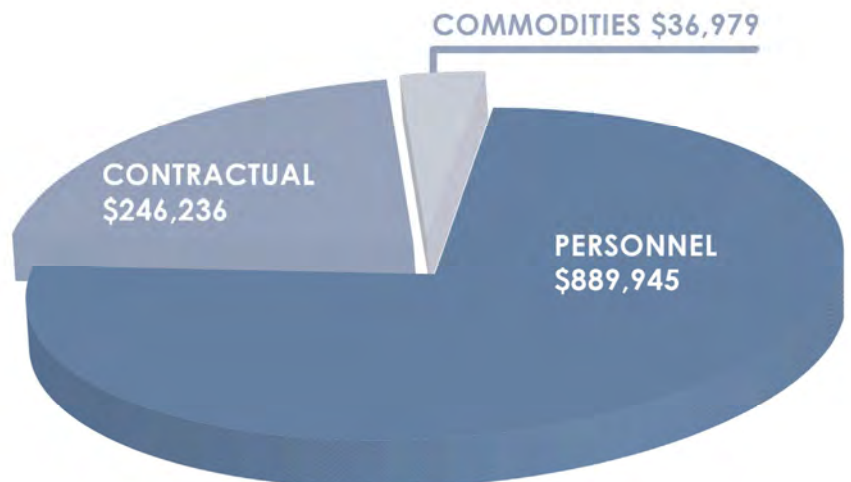
### 2022 Treasurer Office Revenues

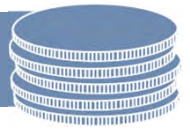
**\$2,041,806**



### 2022 Treasurer Office Expenses

**\$1,173,160**





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 funds 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 2022, the Treasurer's office helped 12 local units of government strike \$2,131 (all levies) in 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 2021-2022, all un-cashed checks were reissued.

## County Funds at a Glance

Fiscal Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
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### Depository Accounts

Accounts	23	20	20	21
Bank Charges	\$12,373	\$9,488	\$49,928	\$55,980

### Uncollected Delinquent Personal Property

County Tax	\$29,496	\$33,511	\$42,137	\$43,988
Parks Tax	\$3,959	\$3,321	\$3,955	\$4,833
E 911 Tax	\$2,918	\$4,476	\$5,299	\$6,456
Roads	\$3,139	\$44,115	\$5,200	\$6,439
CMH	\$1,611	\$2,222	\$2,994	\$3,816

### Taxes Stricken from Taxes Receivable

# of Local GU	16	13	12	12
# of Parcels	129	72	63	62
Total \$	\$39,664	\$3,114	\$14,994	\$2,131

### Unclaimed Checks – Escheated to State

# of Checks	*	50	130	*
Total \$	*	\$4,445	\$13,534	*
Not Cashed under \$25	*	\$511	\$1,773	*

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



Cash and investment activities for the 12 months ending September 30, 2022, 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 specifically identified.

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, 2022 – complies with the Ottawa County Investment Policy.

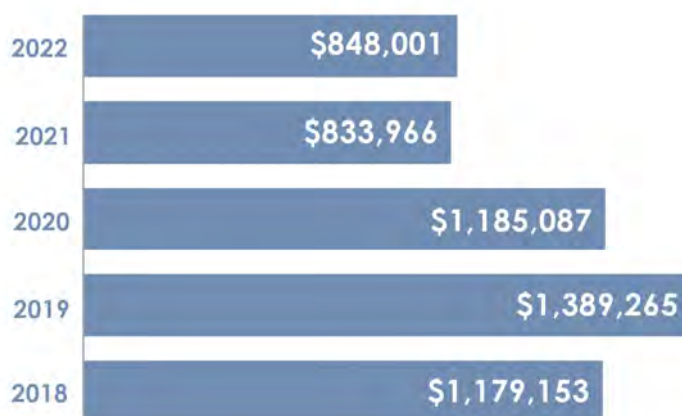
The total Year-To-Date return for 2022 was .864% which compares with a 2022 Benchmark blended index earning of -.35561 (using 2/3 Barclay's 1-5 Government Index blended with 1/3 S&P 0-3-month T-Bill Index.)

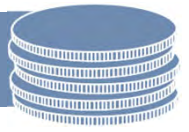
On September 30, 2022, approximately \$37,809,798 of the Portfolio was laddered over a five-year period with a weighted average maturity of 2.243% years. We will continue to ladder while investing to take advantage of the yield curve whenever possible.

## Invested Balance September 30, 2022

\$210,670,366	Par Value
\$207,519,017	Market Value
(\$2,406,651)	Accumulated change in fair market value
<b>Total Return Rate (net)</b>	
2022	0.864%
2021	0.0979%
2020	2.438%
2019	3.811%
2018	0.480%
5-year average	2.243%

## Annual Interest Earned



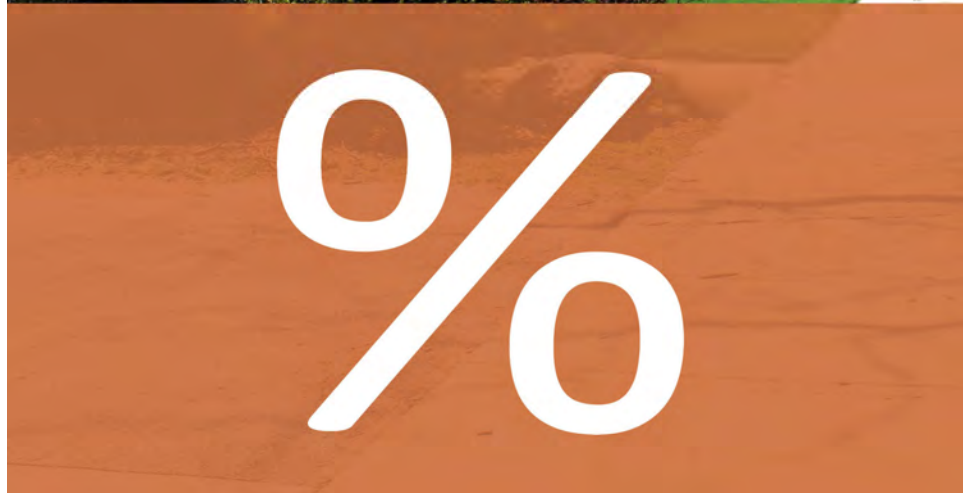


The collection of Summer and Winter Property Taxes is the responsibility of our local units of government.

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*, which is billed and collected by the local units. The offset to this workload is that the investment interest 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 all taxing authorities 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 both the County Treasurer’s office and the local unit treasurers. The county website provides historical tax data online.

Tax rolls for 2004 through 2022 are saved electronically eliminating paper tax rolls and reducing physical vault storage capacity needs.

# REAL TAXES RETURNED DELINQUENT



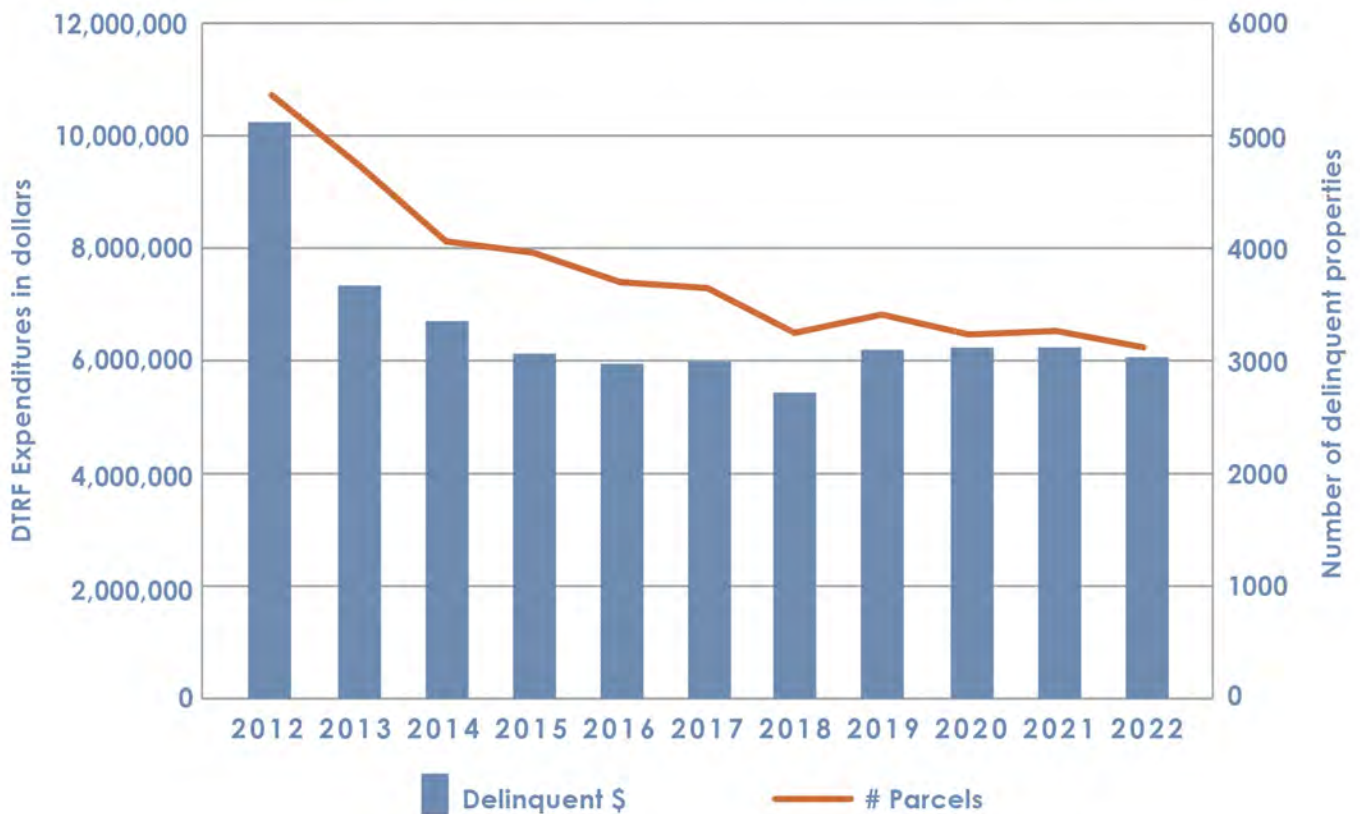
The County operates a *Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund (DTRF)* from which the County pays all other taxing authorities their portion of delinquent property taxes as settled on *March 1* of each year. The payments are distributed to the local units around *April 15*.

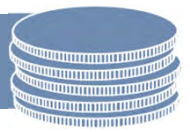
By maintaining the DTRF, Ottawa County is not forced to borrow to reimburse the local units. The DTRF has become one of the financing tools of the county.

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 adjustments to prior year's tax rolls (for up to 20 years)**
- **Processing bankruptcy claims**
- **Managing the annual forfeiture and foreclosure process**
- **Acting as the 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 to understand and discuss their financial situation**
- **Developing payment plans**
- **Referring a taxpayer to local and state resources that could assist with taxes including the Michigan Housing Assistance Fund.**

## Delinquent Property Taxes at a Glance

Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2022
<b>Real Taxes Returned Delinquent</b>			
No. of Properties	3,261	3,293	3,147
Dollars	\$6,229,976	\$6,233,664	\$6,059,579
<b>Forfeited and Foreclosed</b>			
Certified Mail County	2232	1778	1656
Property Forfeited	410	340	344
Property Foreclosed	7	6	7
Financial Hardship Given	20	9	28
<b>Tax Collections</b>			
Receipts Written	4888	4721	4308
Dollars in Millions	\$7.70	\$6.57	\$7.43
Interest & Fees	\$1,025,116	\$971,505	\$906,305
<b>Tax Roll Adjustments</b>			
Number Processed	605	488	453
<b>Foreclosed Land Sales</b>			
Proceeds from Sale	\$7,800	\$179,124	\$13,573
<b>Total Tax, Fees &amp; Interest Billed</b>	<b>\$5,370</b>	<b>\$55,351</b>	<b>\$3,282</b>
Less charge Back to Tax Units	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Gain (Loss) on Land Sales</b>	<b>\$13,170</b>	<b>\$123,773</b>	<b>\$10,291</b>

- **Instituting monthly ACH withdrawals from checking accounts**

- **Use of Hardship Deferral\***

\* In FY 2020-21, we used the deferral to protect 9 properties. In 2021-2022, we used the deferral to protect 28 properties.

Seven properties were foreclosed on April 1, 2022

Of these seven parcels, all were vacant parcels. Five sold at auction, one was taken by the local unit, and one sold at a second auction.



*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.

Two properties are held by the Land Bank. They are both gap parcels.

## Ottawa County Land Bank Authority Finances

	2022 Actual
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Tax Capture	\$ 0
Sale of Property	\$ 0
Other Revenue	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Legal Services	\$ 0
Administrative Expense	\$ 0
Dues & Memberships	\$ 125
Mileage	\$ 0
Conference	\$ 0
Project Cost Incentive Grant	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	
<b>NET</b>	\$125
<i>Prior Year End Fund Balance</i>	\$50,121
<b>YEAR-END FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$49,996</b>

### Ottawa County Land Bank Authority Board Members

**Amanda Price**  
County Treasurer (by statute), Chair

**Tim Maday,**  
City of Zeeland, Vice-chair

**Tom Oonk**  
Zeeland Township, Secretary

**Vince Bush**  
Holland Township, Treasurer

**Randy Meppelink**  
County Commissioner, Appointed County Member

**Amanda Murray**  
Lakeshore Advantage  
Economic Development Member

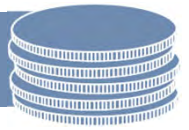
**Dan Stirikwerda**  
City of Hudsonville, City Member

**John Shay**  
County Administrator, Appointed County Member

**Dale Wyngarden**  
Citizen Member



# DOG & KENNEL LICENSE PROGRAM

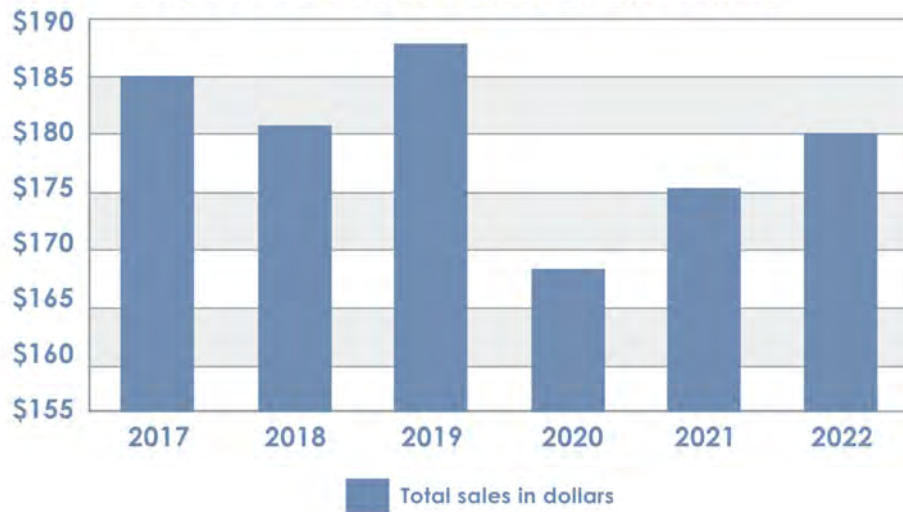


The County Treasurer's Office manages the dog and kennel license program for the County. Ottawa County sells both one year and three-year licenses on a year-round basis. Fees for yearly dog licenses are:

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

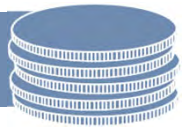
In 2018, the Animal Ordinance was updated and now reports most violations as civil infractions (versus misdemeanors) which allow animal control officers to write tickets without concern of creating a criminal record for the owner.

**Dog License Sale Revenues (in thousands)**



**Total Active Dog Licenses in Each Year (in thousands)**





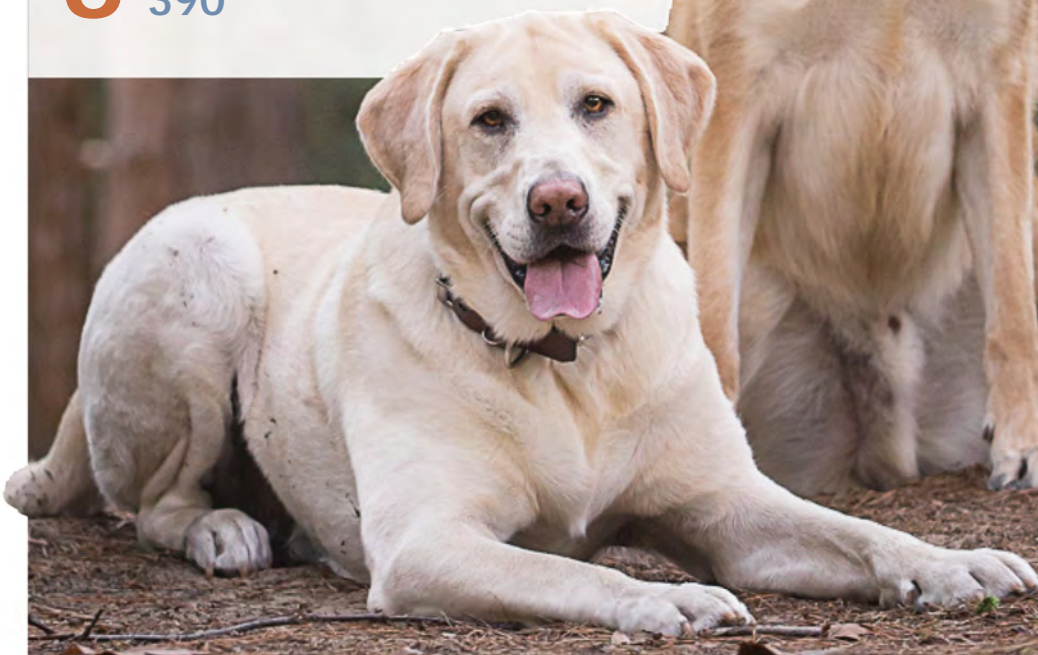
# 2022 DOG DATA

## TOP BREEDS

## TOP NAMES

- 1** Labrador Retriever  
968
- 2** Golden Retriever  
551
- 3** German Shepherd  
390

- 1** Bella  
128
- 2** Luna  
99
- 3** Charlie  
94



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 set by state statute and is a minimum of \$5 for up to 25 parcels and 20 cents per parcel per deed thereafter.

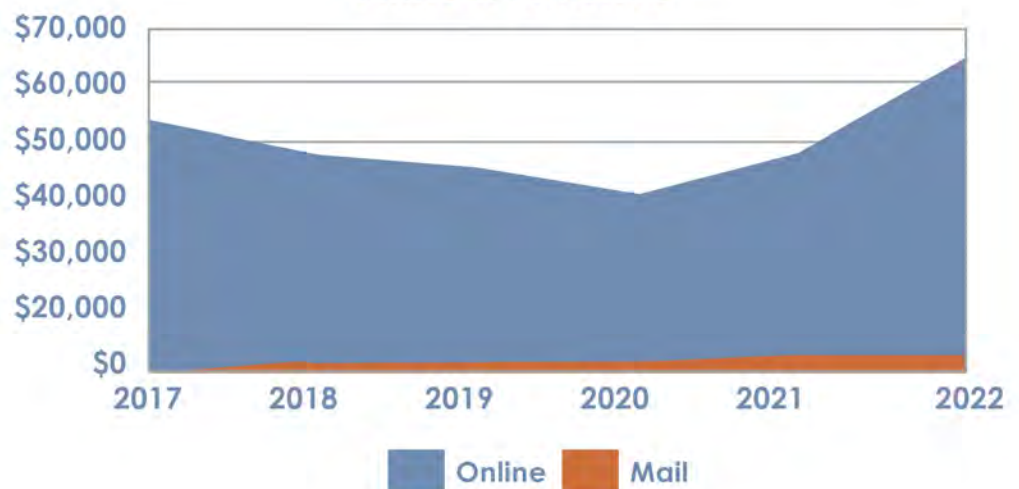
Tax search requests are received via U.S. Postal Service or the county’s website. The fee is set by State statute at a maximum of 50 cents per parcel/year. Through the online search service, customers can verify the property information and then obtain written documentation for delinquent and paid taxes 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 at no charge.

Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2022
<b>Certification Revenue</b>			
Deed Certification	\$31,271	\$37,182	\$54,837
<b>Tax Search Revenue</b>			
Mail Searches	\$2,002	\$3,132	\$3,127
Business On-line Search	\$13,903	\$9,310	\$8,884
Personal On-line Search	\$3,108	\$1,242	\$1,468
Total Search \$	\$19,013	\$13,684	\$13,479
<b>Online Utilization</b>	<b>*89%</b>	<b>*77%</b>	<b>76%</b>

*\*Convenience fees suspended during COVID*

Annual revenue



# MUNICIPAL CIVIL INFRACTIONS



The Municipal Civil Infraction Bureau was established by the Board of Commissioners in 1995.

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

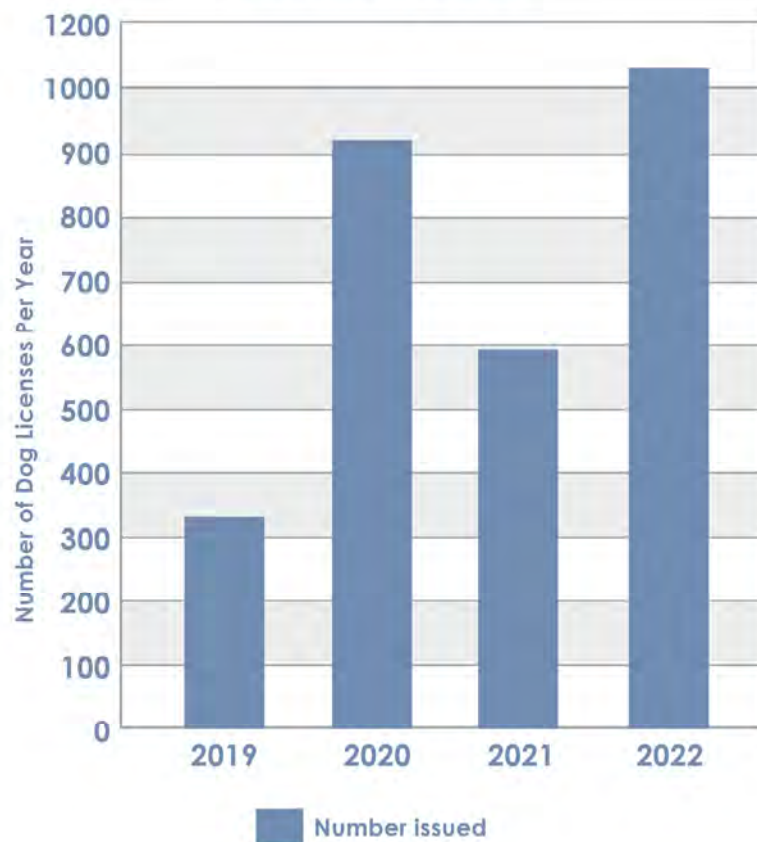
- **County Parks & Recreation Department**
- **County Water Resources Commission**
- **Environmental Health**
- **Sheriff’s Animal Control officers**

The fines are established by County Ordinance and any fines not paid are turned over to District Court to be processed as any other citation to the court.

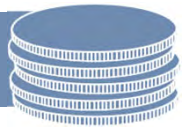
Beginning in 2013, the Parks Department issued a notice that a citation could be voided if a county Parks Pass was purchased within two weeks of the citation.

Fiscal Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Citations Disposition</b>				
Issued	328	934	598	1053
Paid In Person	183	117	81	104
\$ Collected	\$10,734	\$7,228	\$4,719	\$5,286
Paid Online	112	395	290	528
\$ Collected	\$5,521	\$17,611	\$13,062	\$23,611
Total Revenue	\$16,225	\$24,839	\$17,781	\$28,897
To District Court	9	132	104	92
Dismissed	1	61	123	173
Pending	-	-	-	-

**Citations issued**

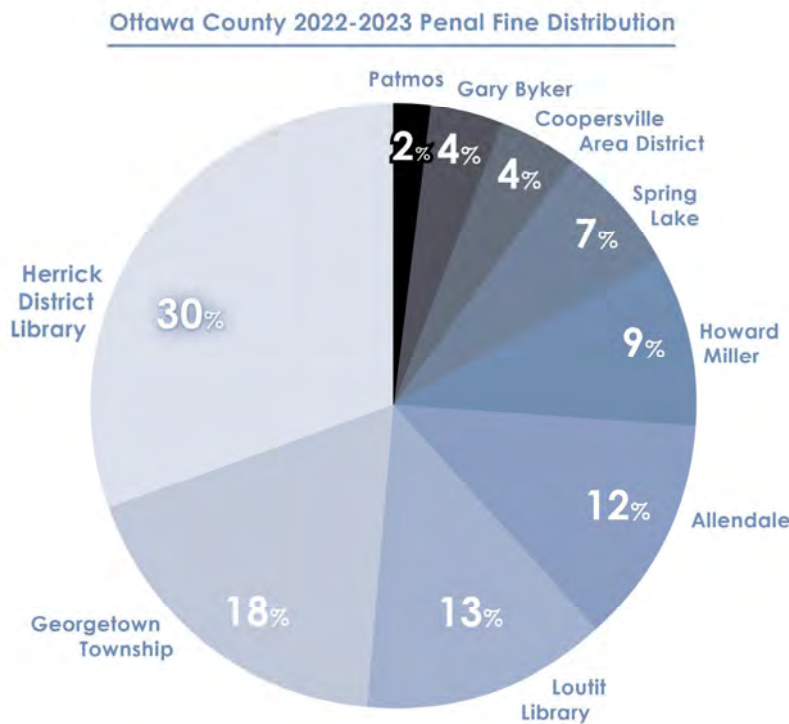


# LIBRARY PENAL FINES



*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).



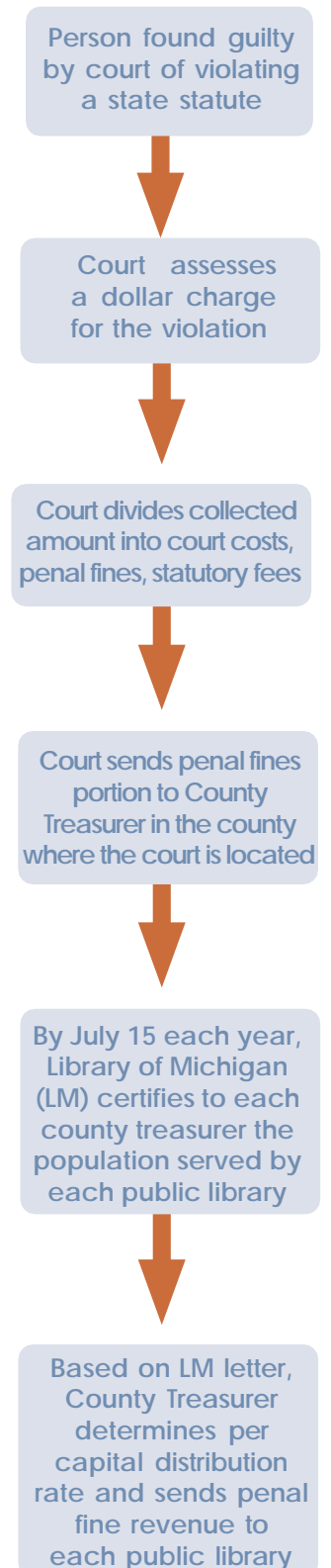
The County Treasurer’s office receives the penal fines throughout the year. In July, the Library of Michigan sends out a listing of the eligible libraries and associated populations, and the County Treasurer’s office disburses the collected penal fine funds to each library.

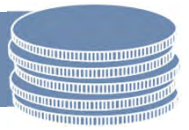
In recent years, the penal fines distribution total has ranged from **\$755,000 to over \$1.02 million**. In 2020, the total distributed was **\$755,171** and in 2021 the distribution amount totaled **\$813,728**. The increase between those two years was likely due to fewer penal fines being written during COVID shut-downs.

### Fine Distribution by Library

Allendale Township	\$104,497
Coopersville Area District	\$37,444
Georgetown Township	\$159,743
Patmos (Jamestown)	\$28,440
Herrick District	\$259,214
Gary Byker Memorial	\$36,543
Loutit District	\$116,153
Spring Lake District	\$58,675
Howard Miller	\$74,040
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$874,749</b>

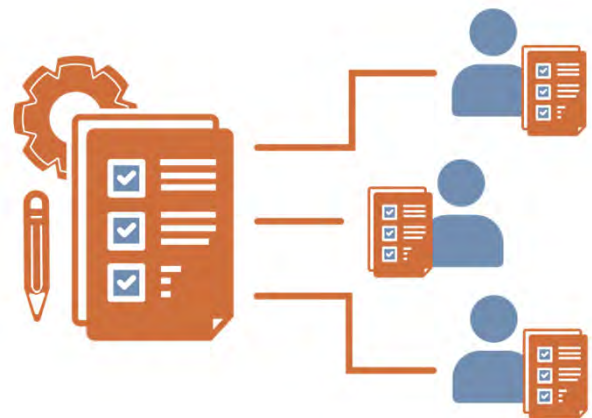
## Life of a Penal Fine



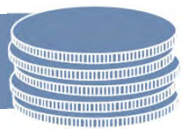


**Implement and Train county staff members with new credit card processing vendor**

**Update** Municipal Civil Infraction Ordinance procedures across departments



**Implement new contract with OPEB Trust financial advisor**



**QUESTIONS?**