

OTTAWA COUNTY TREASURER'S

Annual **REPORT**

Cheryl Clark, Treasurer

March 2024





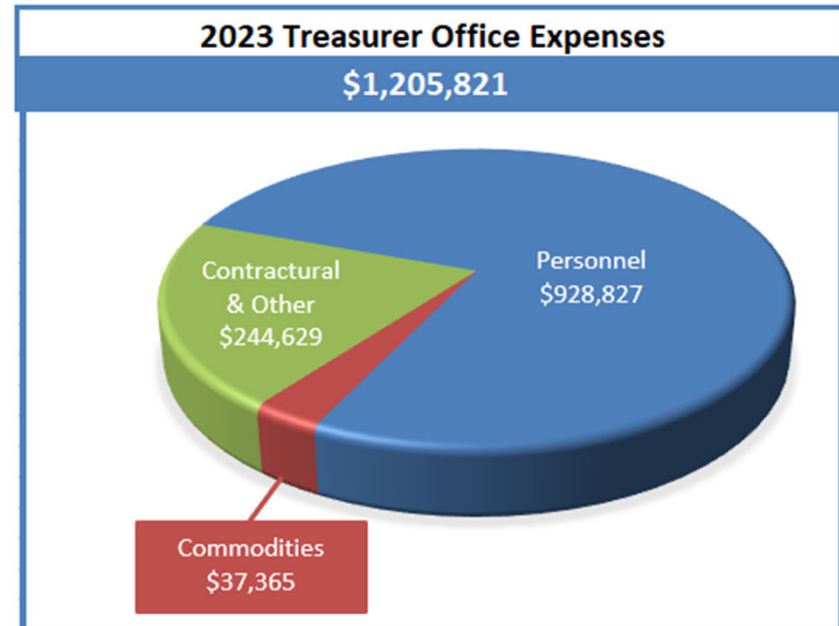
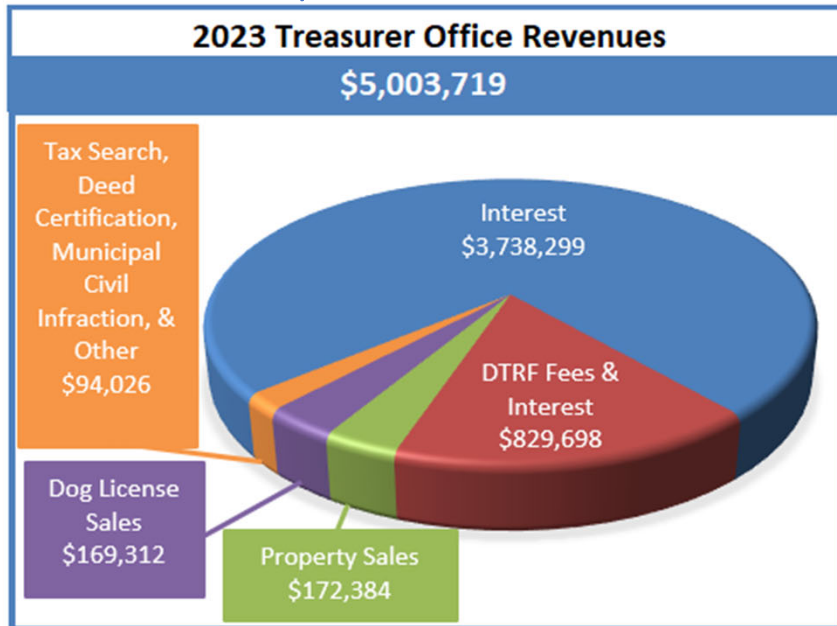
March 2024

Ottawa County Board of Commission Members,

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 2023 fiscal year. It can broadly be broken into three categories: “Dollars, Dogs, and Delinquencies.”

Cheryl Clark, Ottawa County Treasurer



The Ottawa County Treasurer’s Office Mission Statement

We are stewards of the financial resources of Ottawa County and accurately account for and prudently invest County revenue with integrity and compassion for the benefit of our residents.



CUSTODIAN OF COUNTY FUNDS

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; transferring funds to cover county disbursements; opening and closing bank accounts; adding and removing bank account signers and online banking users; and reconciling bank and investment accounts to the general ledger. Certain activities for the Ottawa County Insurance Authority, Ottawa County Building Authority, Ottawa County Land Bank Authority, Ottawa County Public Defender Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA), Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner, Ottawa County Road Commission, and Ottawa County Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Trust are also managed by the Treasurer's Office.

County Funds at a Glance				
Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Depository Accounts				
Accounts	20	20	21	31
Bank Charges	\$ 9,488	\$ 49,928	\$ 55,980	\$ 35,784
Unclaimed Checks - Escheated to State				
# of Checks	50	13	*	103
Total \$	\$ 4,445	\$ 13,534	*	\$ 15,517
Not Cashed Under \$25	\$ 511	\$ 1,773	*	\$ 2,103

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

Escheats

When reconciling the various county checking accounts, a list of the outstanding checks created and any checks that remain un-cashed for over one year must be escheated to the State of Michigan. Before escheating the checks, due process is completed by the Treasurer's Office. Due process includes researching payee mailing addresses and sending letters to any addresses that are different than on the check. Once the checks are escheated, payee's or their heirs may claim the funds from the Michigan Department of Treasury. Under recent changes in state law, the County Treasurer's Office now retains and must account for all unclaimed checks under \$25 and will pay out the funds to those who file a claim with our office.



GENERAL FUND INVESTMENT POOL

Cash and investment activities for the 12 months ending September 30, 2023, discussed in this portion of the report, 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, Ottawa County Land Bank Authority, Ottawa County Road Commission, OPEB Trust, or certain activities of the Water Resources Commissioner, unless specifically identified.

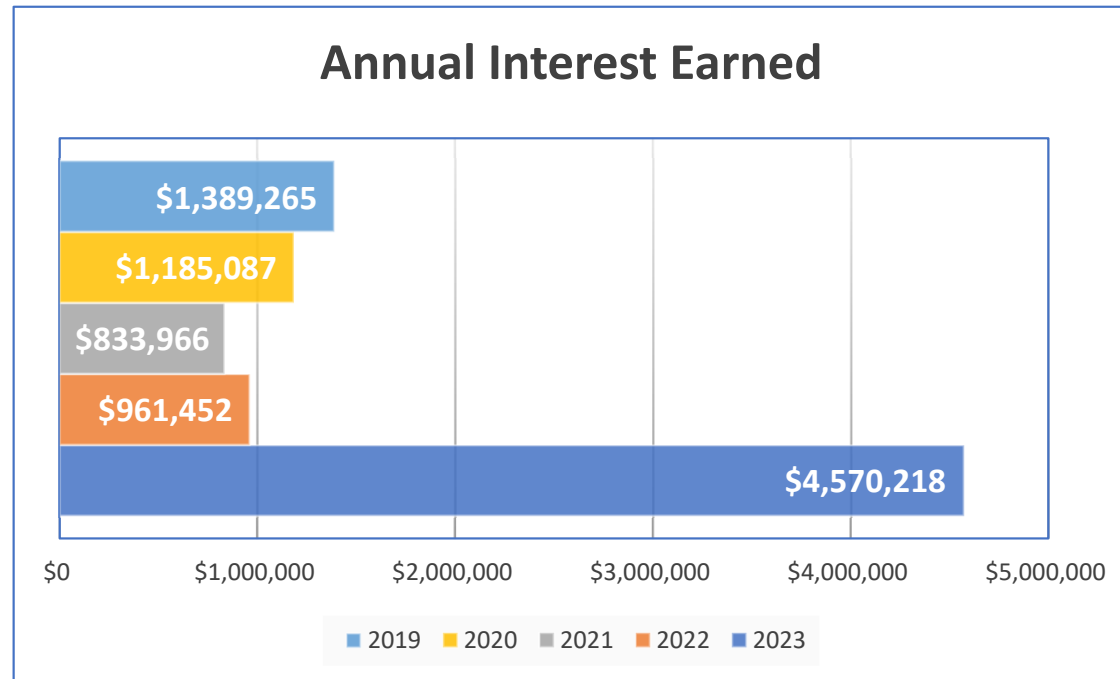
The primary objectives of the County's investment activities are to follow [Public Act 20 of 1943](#) and the Ottawa County Investment Policy which provides the following priorities (in order):

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

The investment activity throughout Fiscal Year 2023, complies with the Investment Policy.

Invested Balance at September 30, 2023

\$ 220,722,859	Par Value
\$ 217,633,186	Market Value
\$ (1,702,305)	Accumulated change in fair market value



Total Return Rate (net)

2023	2.773%
2022	0.864%
2021	0.710%
2020	2.438%
2019	3.811%
5-year average	2.119%

The total Year-To-Date return for 2023 was 2.773% which compares with a 2023 Benchmark blended index earning of -0.246944% (using 2/3 Barclay's 1 to 5-year Government Index blended with 1/3 S&P 0 to 3-month T-Bill Index.) On September 30, 2023, approximately \$36,495,000 of the Portfolio was laddered over a five-year period with a weighted average maturity of 1.4685 years. We will continue to ladder while investing to take advantage of the yield curve whenever possible.



PROPERTY TAX SEARCH AND DEED CERTIFICATION

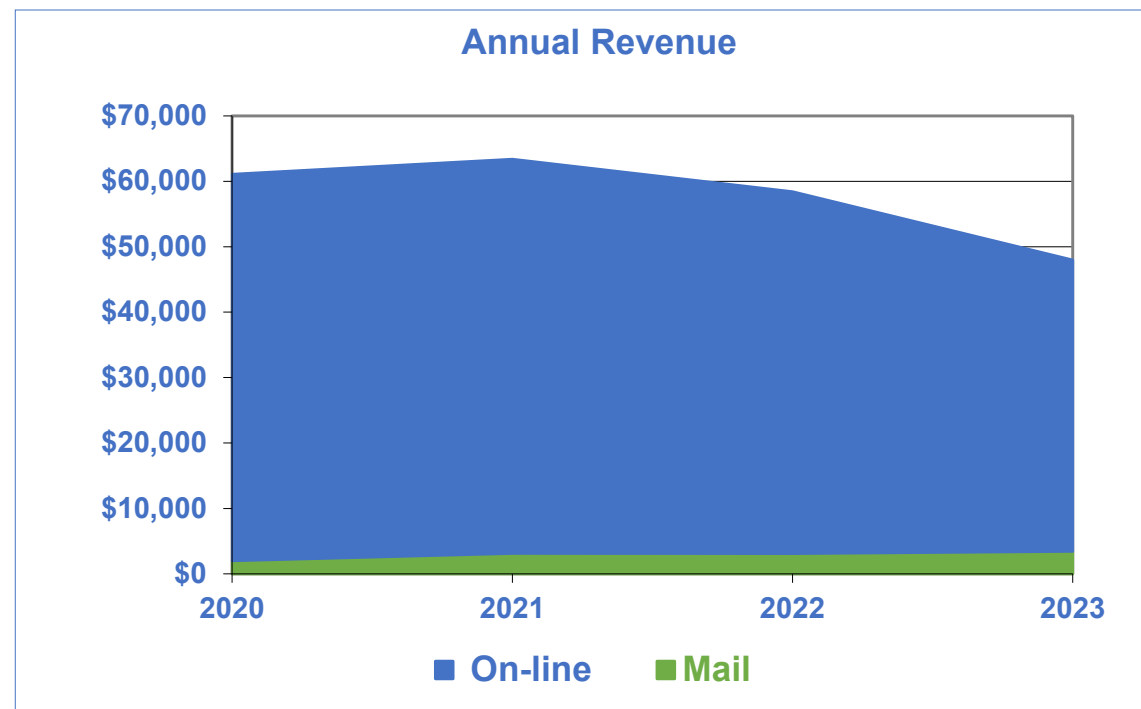
A tax search is a *documented, paid tax status verification* from the Ottawa County Treasurer's Office. The verification may be of delinquent tax status, historical tax roll amounts (including if paid or not), and legal descriptions.

Tax 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 \$0.50 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 the Grand Haven Public Service Center for individuals to do their own searches at no charge.

Tax searches are also performed when documents conveying property are submitted for recording (*Public Act 206 of 1893*) and land divisions (*Public Act 23 of 2019*). These documents are received from the Ottawa County Clerk/Register of Deeds Office or from the local governmental unit. The charge for certifying the recording of conveyance is a minimum of \$5 for up to 25 parcels and \$0.20/parcel per deed thereafter.

Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Certification Revenue				
Recording Certifications	\$42,050	\$49,676	\$44,932	\$37,895
Tax Search Revenue				
Mail Searches	\$2,002	\$3,132	\$3,127	\$3,462
Business On-line Search	\$13,903	\$9,310	\$8,884	\$5,462
Personal On-line Search	\$3,108	\$1,242	\$1,468	\$1,135
Total Search \$	\$19,013	\$13,684	\$13,479	\$10,059
<i>On-Line Utilization</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>66%</i>





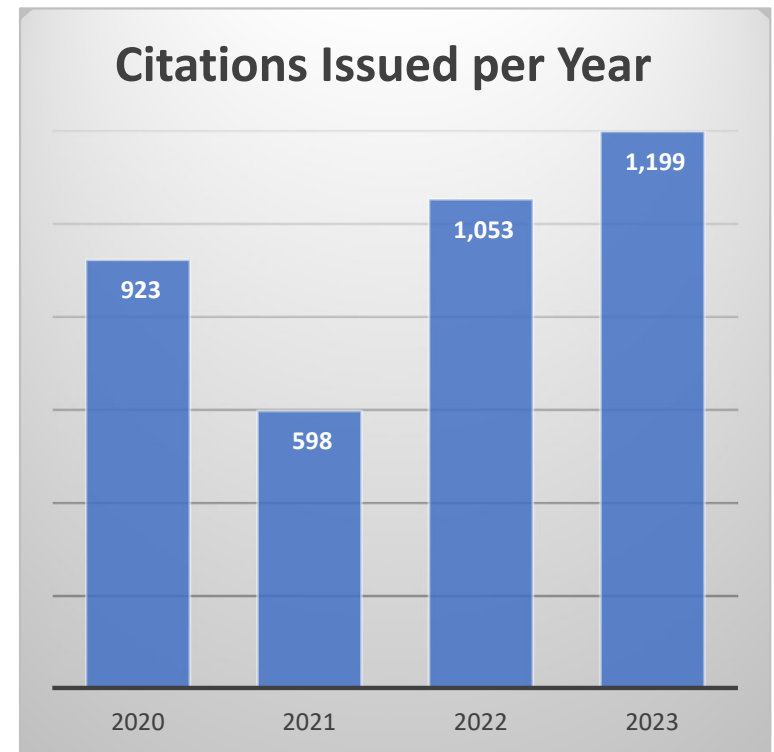
MUNICIPAL CIVIL INFRACTIONS

Public Act 236 of 1961 allows for the establishment of a municipal ordinance violations bureau. In 1995, the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners established the Municipal Civil Infraction Bureau, and the Treasurer’s Office was designated as the collection office for the Bureau. The Bureau processes violation tickets issued by:

- Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Department
- Ottawa County Environmental Health Department
- Ottawa County Water Resources Commission
- Ottawa County 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.

Citations Disposition				
Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Issued	923	598	1,053	1,199
Paid in Person	117	81	104	23
\$ Collected	\$ 7,228	\$ 4,719	\$ 5,286	\$2,201
Paid Online	395	290	528	51
\$ Collected	\$17,611	\$13,062	\$23,611	\$3,663
Total Revenue	\$24,839	\$17,781	\$28,897	\$5,864
To District Court	132	104	92	21
Dismissed	61	123	173	133
Pending	-	-	-	-



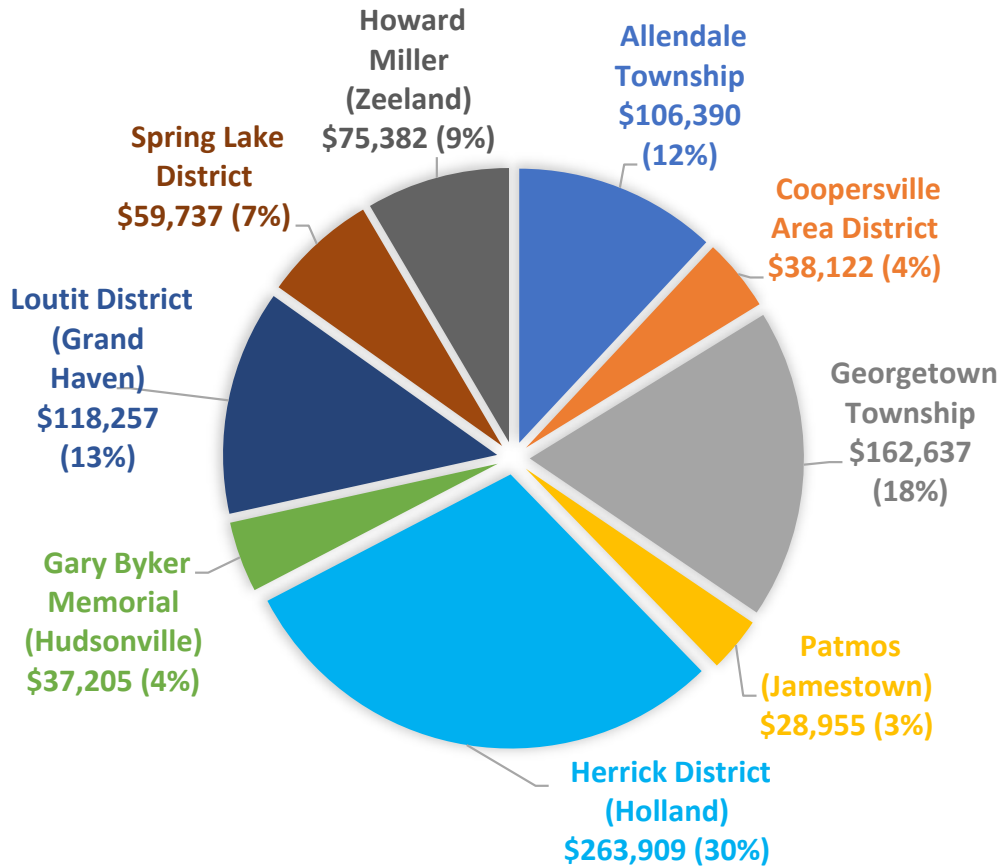


LIBRARY PENAL FINES

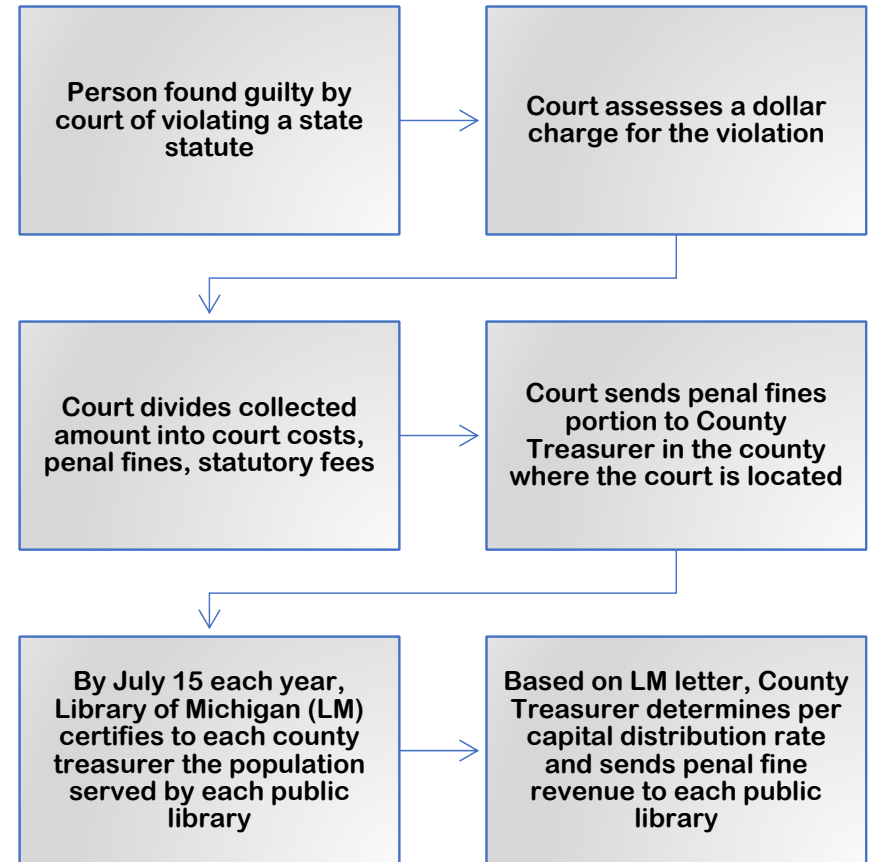
Public Act 59 of 1964 established the Penal Fine distribution system which supports public libraries, as well as the collection and distribution of penal fines based on population of the jurisdiction of the local library services.

The County Treasurer’s Office receives the penal fines from each court throughout the year. In July, the Library of Michigan sends out a listing of the eligible libraries and associated populations to the county. The County Treasurer’s Office then disburses the collected penal fine funds, plus earned interest, to each library. The following chart lists the public libraries located in Ottawa County and the penal fine distribution made to each library in July 2023.

2023 PENAL FINE DISTRIBUTION



Life of a Penal Fine





DOG & KENNEL LICENSE PROGRAM

The County Treasurer’s Office manages the dog and kennel license program for the County in accordance with *Public Act 339 of 1919*.

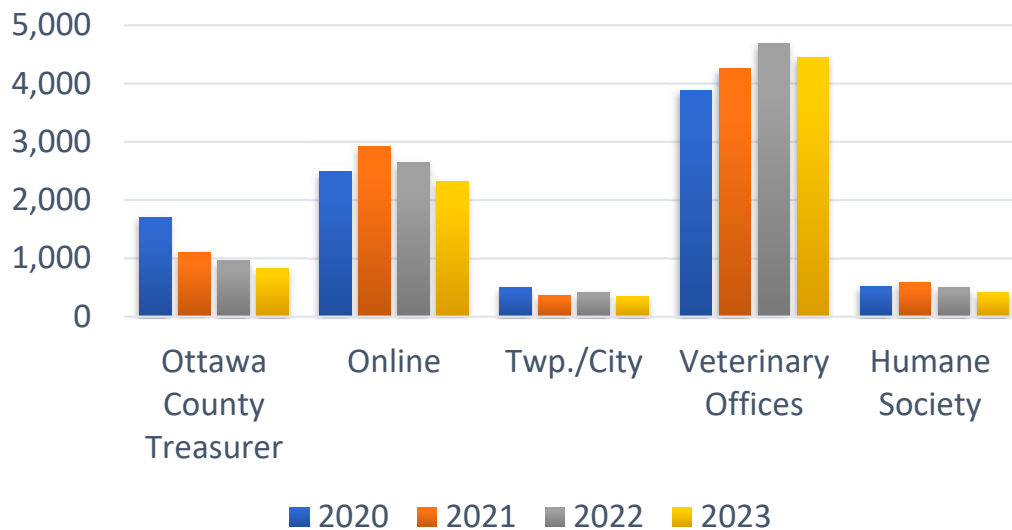
Ottawa County sells both one-year and three-year *dog licenses* on a year-round basis, requiring proof of a rabies vaccination and spay/neuter certificate (if applicable). Licenses are available for purchase on the county website or from various locations (as shown in the graph below).

DOG LICENSE FEES		
	1-Year License	3-Year License
Male/Female	\$25	\$70
Spayed/Neutered	\$10	\$25
Puppies	\$10	N/A

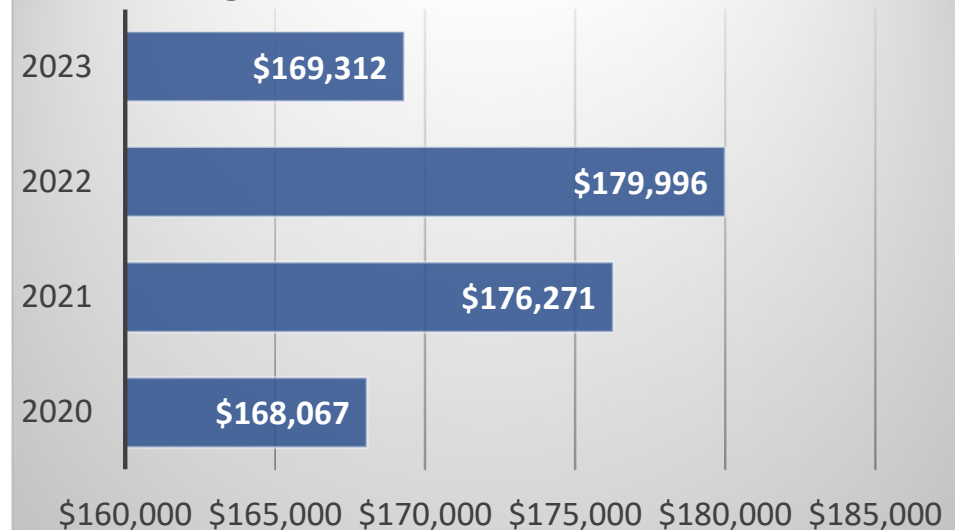
To purchase a *Kennel License*, an application is completed by the kennel owner and turned into the County Treasurer’s Office. The application must be signed by the zoning administrator for the local governmental unit and the Ottawa County Animal Control Officer after completing an inspection of the kennel.

KENNEL LICENSE FEES		
	10 or Less Dogs	10 or More Dogs
January - May	\$10	\$25
June - December	\$20	\$50
Inspection Fee	\$65	\$65

Total Dog & Kennel License Sales



Dog & Kennel License Sale Revenues





DOG & KENNEL LICENSE PROGRAM

TOP BREEDS	TOP NAMES
1 Labrador Retriever 849	1 Luna 98
2 Golden Retriever 514	2 Daisy 90
3 German Shepherd 350	3 Bella 86

Rocky (left) with pal Remi at Kirk Park.



Cat licenses are not required in Ottawa County, but the Treasurer’s Office offers them to those owners who wish to have one. Cat owners that purchase licenses do so in the hope that if their cat is lost it would be reunited with them more quickly.

Because it is a choice to purchase a cat license, there isn’t a rabies or spay/neuter requirement, and only one-year licenses are available at a cost of \$10.



CURRENT REAL PROPERTY TAXES THAT BECOME DELINQUENT REAL PROPERTY TAXES

The collection of Summer and Winter Property Taxes is the responsibility of our local units of government. Throughout the tax year, the Treasurer’s Office assists local government assessor and treasurers by verifying tax roll calculations prior to the bills being mailed to taxpayers.

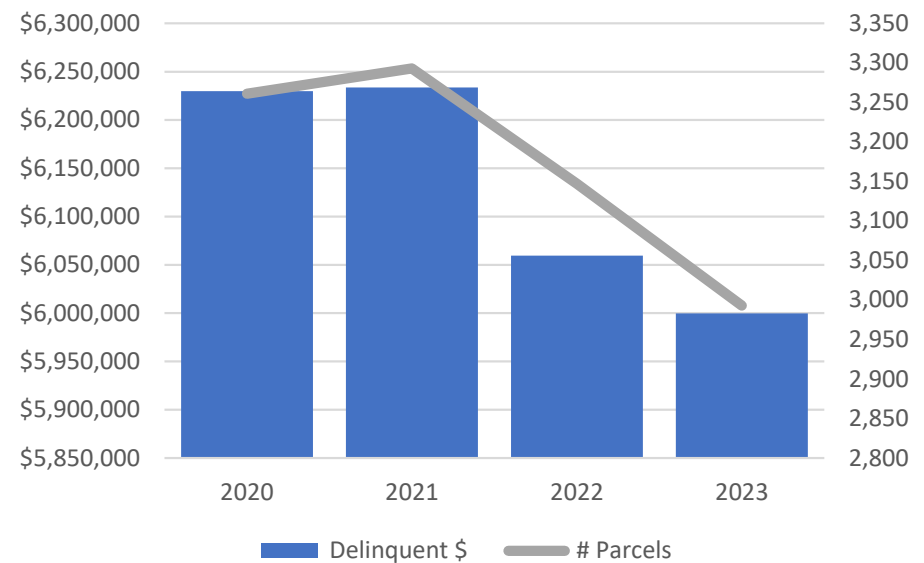
Property tax collections on county levies received by the local units are paid to the County Treasurer’s Office twice a month. Included in these payments is the *State Education Tax (SET)*, which the State of Michigan relies on the Treasurer’s Office to coordinate collection and provide accountability for. The offset to the workload for the County Treasurer’s Office, is the retainment of investment interest earnings on the SET levy.

The current year real property tax rolls are turned over to the County Treasurer’s Office by the local units of government on March 1 of each year as outlined in *Public Act 206 of 1893*. A settlement process occurs during the month of March which consists of verifying the taxes billed and adjusted as well as the delinquent real property tax rolls.

As a result of this process, the delinquent real property taxes are “purchased” using the county’s *Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund*, which makes all taxing authorities whole. The 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, saving hours of staff time for both the County Treasurer’s Office and the local unit treasurers.

By maintaining the DTRF, Ottawa County is not forced to borrow to reimburse the taxing authorities. The graph shows the volume of delinquent parcels and the total dollars necessary in each year to “purchase” the delinquent taxes.

Historical Delinquent Dollars & Delinquent Parcels





DELINQUENT REAL PROPERTY TAXES

It is the responsibility of the County Treasurer to collect the delinquent real property taxes. Functions associated with delinquent real property taxes include:

- Writing receipts
- Processing tax roll adjustments to prior year's tax rolls (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. We assist taxpayers by:

- Meeting to understand and discuss their financial situation
- Developing payment plans
- Utilizing monthly ACH withdrawals from taxpayer checking accounts
- Referring a taxpayer to local and state resources that could assist with taxes, including the Michigan Housing Assistance Fund
- Use of Hardship Deferral

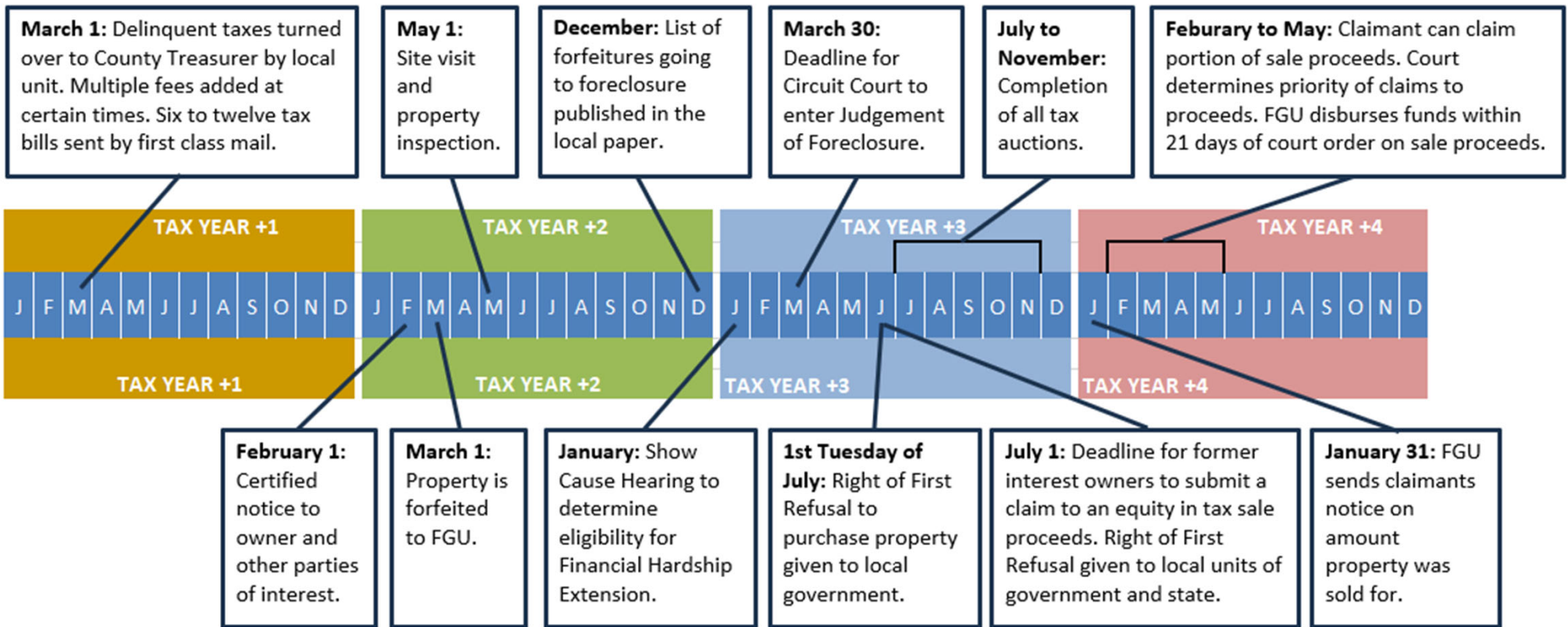
DELINQUENT REAL PROPERTY TAXES AT A GLANCE				
Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Real Property Taxes Returned Delinquent				
No. of Properties	3,261	3,293	3,147	2,993
Dollars	\$6,229,976	\$6,233,664	\$6,059,579	\$5,999,630
Tax Roll Adjustments				
No. Processed	605	488	453	461
Tax Collections				
Receipts Written	4,888	4,721	4,308	4,191
Dollars in Millions	\$7.70	\$6.57	\$7.43	\$6.77
Interest & Fees	\$1,025,116	\$971,505	\$906,305	\$829,698
Forfeited and Foreclosed				
No. of Certified Mailings	2,232	1,778	1,656	1,784
Property Forfeited	410	340	344	327
Property Foreclosed	7	6	7	12
Financial Hardship given	20	9	28	20
Foreclosed Land Sales				
Proceeds From Sale	\$7,800	\$179,124	\$13,573	\$214,889
Less Total Tax, Fees, & Interest Billed	(\$5,370)	(\$55,351)	(\$3,282)	(\$42,505)
Less Charge Back to Tax Units	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Total Gain (Loss) on Land Sales</i>	<i>\$2,430</i>	<i>\$123,773</i>	<i>\$10,291</i>	<i>\$172,384</i>

Twelve properties were foreclosed on April 1, 2023. Of these twelve parcels, eight were sold at the first auction, two were sold at the second auction, and two did not sell.



FORECLOSURE TIMELINE

As outlined in MCL 211.78



FGU = Forclosing Governmental Unit



OTTAWA COUNTY LAND BANK

The Ottawa County Land Bank Authority (LBA) was organized under *Public Act 258 of 2003* in 2010. The original steering committee determined it was important for the private sector to take the lead on property development as much as possible, so the LBA seeks only to acquire tax foreclosed properties if they remain unsold after all property tax auctions. The LBA does not have taxing authority and was established with its only funding stream coming from property sale transactions.

The purchase and anticipated changes to properties held in the Land Bank will reset the property values, thereby bringing additional tax revenue to the community, which is the type of results that the LBA was established to produce. Currently two gap parcels are being held by the Land Bank.

All ongoing support to accomplish the work of the LBA is provided by the County Treasurer's Office, along with assistance provided by the County's Corporate Counsel and the Ottawa County Department of Strategic Impact.

OTTAWA COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY FINANCIALS	
	2023 Actual
REVENUE	
Tax Capture	\$0
Interest on Investments	\$1,279
Other Revenue	\$0
Sale of Property	\$0
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,279
EXPENSES	
Legal Services	\$0
Administrative Expenses	\$0
Dues & Memberships	\$125
Mileage	\$0
Conference	\$150
Project Cost Incentive Grant	\$0
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$275
<i>Prior Year-End Fund Balance</i>	<i>\$49,996</i>
YEAR-END FUND BALANCE	\$51,000

2022-2023 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

Joe Moss

County Commissioner, Appointed County Member

Amanda Murray

Lakeshore Advantage EDC Member

Dan Strikwerda

City of Hudsonville, City Member

John Gibbs

County Administrator, Appointed County Member

Jordan Jorritsma

Citizen Member



OTTAWA COUNTY LAND BANK

The Ottawa County LBA was awarded \$512,500 in Blight Elimination Program funding from the State Land Bank Association, supporting four projects in four different local units. Project management is being provided by the Department of Strategic Impact.

The following pages provide information on each project.

135/137 Main Street in the City of Zeeland • Full Demolition \$55,064





135/137 Main Street in the City of Zeeland (continued)



\$3,000,000
Capital Investment

Increased Tax Base
&
Job Creation



8 Residential Units

3,100 sq ft Restaurant

Public Walkway





19686 Main Street, Village of Conklin, Chester Township



Full
Demolition
\$99,745

Public safety
hazard removed



Land is being
prepped for
Redevelopment
&
Investment





518 Harbor Drive in the City of Grand Haven



Mixed Use
Development

Roof Stabilization

Project Delayed

\$0 Actual Cost





3302 Prospect Street in the City of Hudsonville



Full Demolition

\$110,260

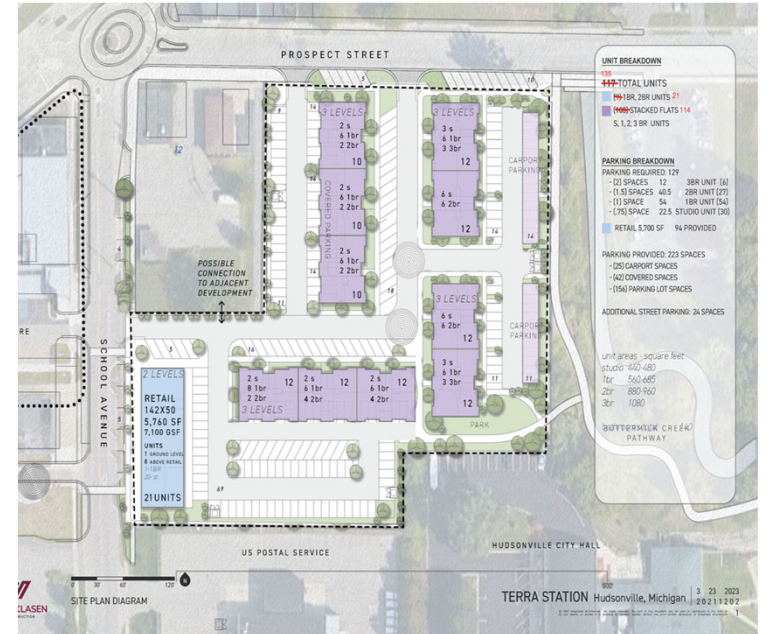
to begin
in
March of 2024

\$27,000,000
Capital Investment

Infrastructure
Improvements

Increased Tax Base
&
Job Creation

136 Residential Units
5,760 sq ft Retail





FISCAL YEAR 2024 INITIATIVES



**Complete RFPs for Investment Software
and Cashiering Software**

**Restructure by adding a new FTE,
updating job descriptions, and
providing cross training**



**Fully integrate a new
Chief Deputy Treasurer to the role**

