



COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Submitted to the Township Board of Trustees

By: Jack Macholl

January 2, 2018

Courier- Prepared outline and production schedule for Alan and Diane. Completed research, wrote initial draft copy for internal review. Our objective is to be in the mail by February 12, 2018 with online promotion beginning February 14th.

Assessor's Office- worked with Deputy Assessor Leonard Shifflett and Assessor Churchwell on January event press release and social media promotion. Created Tax Law Ramifications on Property Taxes release. Distribution of release to Patch, Tribune Local and area papers for publicity.

Events- December Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at NTT. Coordinated with Senior Center team, hosted LIHEAP event for NTT on December 14, 2017. A total of 7 applicants were served with \$2,343 in total utility grant applications submitted.

Worked with Len McCaw (IT consultant) to help NSSC staff test equipment on 12/13/17, all went smoothly and intake day went without a hitch. Working with NSSC to promote January 18, 2018 LIHEAP intake event. Secured local publicity and extensive visibility partnering with NSSC on social media.

Food Pantry-December Distribution Day- worked with Brian on holiday food distribution day, unloading van, taking photos, writing email volunteer thank you, photo sharing and PR consent form management. Multiple social media posts.

Bernie's Book Bank –plans are being made to sponsor a Spring/Summer 2018 book collection drive to assist at-risk children in Illinois. New Trier Township would again serve as a key North Shore Collection Point from **July 9- August 3, 2018.**

The plan is to continue our existing partnership with the Winnetka Presbyterian Church (who is "in" for the 2018 drive). I will reach out to local park district directors regarding summer camp collections and hopefully involving other religious/civic groups that may wish to participate.

I believe we show the Township's leadership and concern for a wonderful cause. Aside from running off some flyers on our machine and my time, the costs are minimal and public relations dividends are large. We hope to top our 3,000-book collection pilot from 2016 during the summer 2018 event. Anyone wishing to help promote the event or work to secure books should contact me.

Publicity

Local publicity work included photos at the Township office and off-site for Food Pantry distribution days and LIHEAP event.

Completed:

- Press releases for Assessor Churchwell- **January 2018 event and Pre-Payment/Tax Law**
- **Social Services-** press release and social media promotion for Community Support Grants
- **Social Services-** press release/**NTT website and social media promotion** for Council on Disability Services Advocacy Education Program
- Press Release for **LIHEAP**, January 18, 2018 application day-distribution online and local editors, reminders on social media
- Distributed paper copies of **Courier** Newsletter to local libraries, police/village facilities
- Wrote article for Alan Goldberg, **NTT Year in Review** for Winnetka Current

Pending:

- **Annual Town Meeting-**publicity to promote NTT Annual Meeting 4/10/18
- **Work begins on Fiscal 2017-18 Annual Report**
- **Social Services-Summer Camp Scholarship applications/promotion**
- **LEAD Text-A-Tip 2017 student usage results and re-launch publicity during early 2018**

Web Site – Webmaster management duties included: Multiple edits to Assessor's pages with seminar, removed old forms and tax law pending change information. Created event headline on Assessor seminar for URL page. eNews items were written and added to site. Edited copy, updated Alan's bio on Supervisor page. Uploaded PDF files to "assets" folder for numerous projects. Working with American Eagle technical support for any glitches or issues that arise with the website.

Other

We are now using the new Coordination of Communications Support Request forms. This helps us prioritize communications support and coordinate internal resources.

Plan/calendar for 2018, a final draft of an "at-a-glance" communications calendar will be available shortly.

I will work with Clerk Hoynes to finalize the theme for the **2018 Annual Town Meeting** and begin work on invitations, social media/publicity and local promotion.

Writing and production of the **Fiscal 2017 Annual Report** to begin soon.

Social Media

To date NTT has **680 (+13) followers on Twitter** and **424 (+6) "Likes" of Facebook**. We continue slow organic growth and should consider some "boost posts" on Facebook during 2018 to connect with more community members on social media that are perhaps unaware of our online presence. Elected officials and staff can help tremendously by sharing NTT posts.

Managed holiday messaging and reminders about Community Support Grants and LIHEAP.

The **NTT Text-A-Tip Facebook Group** now has 77 members. We plan to rejuvenate activity and engage additional parents, students, and school faculty and community members during 2018.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/157517808041835/members>

For the Spring 2018 Courier (Draft)

While 2017 may have been tumultuous at the national level, here in the New Trier Township Assessor's Office it was business as usual – assisting township residents with property tax appeals, exemptions filings, and other related matters. Both the Cook County Assessor's Office and the Cook County Board of Review have told us that the number of tax appeals is growing every year, and the number of inquiries that Deputy Assessor Len Shifflett and I fielded bears this out.

While we have long been able to file appeals on line directly to the County Assessor's Office for residents, 2017 was the first year when we were able to do so with appeals to the Board of Review. Len and I hailed this as a very helpful addition to the appeal toolbox.

Do you find County procedures and timing confusing? Would you like to know why "How can I lower my property taxes?" isn't the same question as "How can I lower my Assessment?"

Len and I attempt to demystify property assessment and tax issues in our presentation "The Annual Real Estate Tax Calendar" (formerly "Property Tax 101"), which we offer twice yearly (January and November). Instead of an explanation of what property taxes are about, "Tax Calendar" walks you through the chronology of the process, the roles of the County Assessor's and Treasurer's Offices, and how the Township Assessor can help you deal with the County. Because appeal dates can vary from year to year, we urge you to go to the Township website (newtriertownship.com) and subscribe for Assessor's News emails. This is the most efficient way for you to receive timely information regarding your property taxes.

If you have ideas about other things we could do to help you manage your property taxes, please let us know. You can reach us at: 847-446-8200, or at jchurchwell@newtriertownship.com, or at lshifflett@newtriertownship.com.