



The Michigan Townships Association is the exclusive legislative and public advocate for Michigan's 1,242 townships and is the foremost source of quality education and information for Michigan's elected and appointed township officials.

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# TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT



## AS REAL AS IT GETS

A Guide for Candidates for Township Office

Few people are fully aware of the responsibilities of being a township official when they decide to run for office.

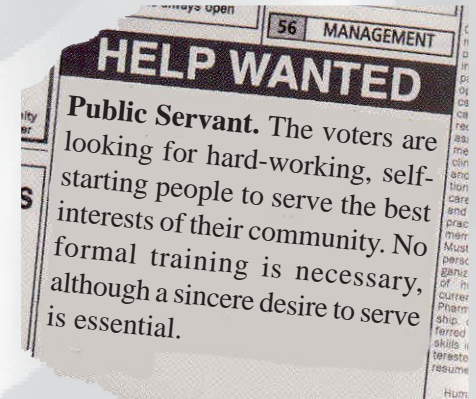
How hard can it be—it's only one meeting a month, right? Wrong.

Whatever township office you are running for, the real work begins after the campaign is finished and you are elected. Anyone can be passionate about an issue. That's not enough. As a township official, you'll be expected to understand the broad responsibilities of the various offices in township government.

Township government is led by a township board consisting of either five or seven members—a supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and two or four trustees.

Michigan townships vary in size, staff support, hours per week performing administrative duties, and day-to-day administration. But, all townships provide services tailored to meet the needs of their residents.

Township officials represent the level of government closest and most responsive to the wishes of the people—this is *As Real As It Gets*.



AS REAL AS IT GETS

The following are  
**CORE COMPETENCIES** for  
Township Officials, as identified  
by the Michigan Townships  
Association:

This brochure does not include all of the responsibilities that you will deal with as a township official. You should contact your township to learn more about the specific functions of the office you are interested in running for.

**EACH OFFICIAL AS A LEGISLATOR SHOULD BE ABLE TO:**

- Demonstrate knowledge about township law (general law or charter) government responsibilities, functions and powers
- Identify the major functions of each branch of government—local, state and federal—along with their relationship to one another
- Communicates and listens effectively
- Utilize consensus-building techniques and motivate others to achieve desired outcomes
- Manages adversity and hostility
- Demonstrates ethical behavior
- Possess vision, especially relative to the township's needs or potential, and utilize public relations skills to positively represent the township
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of other elected and appointed offices
- Demonstrate knowledge of the various committees, boards and commissions serving the township, including their roles and responsibilities
- Understand how township policies and procedures are set
- Be aware of what constitutes lawful township expenditures
- Utilize strategic planning to attain objectives
- Demonstrate knowledge of how ordinances are lawfully adopted and legally enforced

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## AS REAL AS IT GETS



### **SUPERVISOR**

- Moderates township board and annual meetings (if held)
- Chief assessing officer familiar with property tax administration
- Prepares, adopts and monitors township budget

### **CLERK**

- Oversees elections process
- Responsible for township accounting
- Prepares minutes of each township board meeting
- Prepares notices for public meetings
- Maintains township records, books and papers in accordance with record retention and disposal guidelines

### **TREASURER**

- Administers real and personal property tax collection and disburses township revenues
- Implements sound cash management procedures and proper custody of funds, including knowledge of investment instruments and legal limitations on investments
- Possesses knowledge of the township budget and revenue assumptions

### **TRUSTEE**

- Objectively monitors administrative actions for compliance with existing policy and law,
- Ensures township policies and practices serve the public well
- Researches and evaluates how proposed policies and practices would affect the township
- Understands the budget process, financial statements and how to manage the township's affairs in the best interests of the public
- Has fiduciary responsibilities