



ROSCOE TOWNSHIP OFFICES

Our Founding Father – Robert J. Cross 1835

**ROSCOE TOWNSHIP
&
ROSCOE TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WINNEBAGO COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**JOINT REPORT
DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**APPROVED BY THE TOWNSHIP OF ROSCOE'S
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY
ON
SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2023**

I. Purpose

The Township of Roscoe formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 10, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1

II. About Roscoe Township

- We are located in Winnebago County.
- There are 16 townships in our county.
- The population of our Township is 20,204 as of the 2020 census.
- We have 3 part-time employees of the Township (not including elected officials).
- We have 6 employees in our Road District (not including elected officials).
- Our annual budget for 2023/24 Fiscal Year is: \$2,631,597.00.
- Our Township's Equalized Assessed Valuation for 2023 is \$557,450,464.

III. Committee Members

- Bob Nowicki Township Supervisor
- Steve Schreier Township Highway Commissioner
- Pat Henderson Township Trustee
- Elizabeth Lindquist Township Trustee
- Chuck Gilbert Township Trustee
- Phil Rhymer Township Trustee
- Richard Kurtz Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment)
- Gary Blascoe Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment)
- Dawn Cassady Township Resident (Hwy Commissioner Appointment)

IV. Dates of Committee Meetings

All meetings were held at the Roscoe Township Office, located at 5792 Elevator Road in Roscoe, IL. Meetings were scheduled and held immediately following regular meetings, which begin at 7pm. Agendas and minutes attached.

- First (Organizational) Meeting May 10, 2023
- Second Meeting: July 12, 2023
- Third (Final) Meeting: September 13, 2023

ROSCOE GENERAL TOWNSHIP REPORT

V. Programs Offered by Roscoe Township

A. Roscoe Township offers the following services and programs:

- General Assistance to those who qualify
- Cemeteries - Operate and maintain three cemeteries
 - Pinnacle Hill Cemetery – 3.37 acres
 - Willowbrook Cemetery – 19.27 acres
 - Roscoe Cemetery – 8.83 acres
- Parks - Operate and maintain three recreational / youth sports parks and numerous miles of bike paths and walking trails
 - Cross Park – A 41.32-acre park with two playgrounds, benches, volleyball court, softball and hardball diamonds, soccer fields and football fields.
 - Kelley-Myers Park – A 31.81-acre park with baseball fields, bleacher seating, a playground and a 45 x 25 picnic shelter with 4 picnic tables, charcoal grill and electricity.
 - Founders Park – This is a newer development, still in progress. It is a 16.78-acre park that is part of the original farm owned by the first white settler to Roscoe Township, Robert J. Cross. It includes the original homestead, which has been leased to the Historical Society for renovation, and a community center. The remaining acreage is currently under development with OSLAD grant assistance, to include a multi-purpose pavilion, walking paths, and prairie restoration. Future plans include gardens and farmers markets, along with a bench sponsorship program.
 - Community Center - We just recently completed construction on a 3370sf center, located at Founders Park. It can accommodate 117 people for dining. It has 2 bathrooms, a storage area, office, catering kitchen, and a 3360sf main room.
 - Bike Paths & Trails – The historic Stone Bridge Trail was constructed by the township and its nearly 6 miles of crushed limestone is maintained by Roscoe Township, in addition to the historic bridge itself lookout platform, and many miles of bike paths.

B. Other programs we could provide as our Community Center grows:

- Recreational services for Seniors / Youth / All ages
- Walking paths and gardens when our paths are done in Founders Park
- Adopt-A-Bench for new paths at Founders Park

VI. Social Service Agreements

A. We partner with the following not for profits to offer social services:

<u>Entity:</u>	<u>Services Provided:</u>
• SMTD	On-demand Transportation Service
• Roscoe Twp Historical Society	Educational programs and activities centered around the Township's history

B. Our residents have benefitted from these agreements in the following ways:

- SMTD provides low-cost on-demand transportation to all residents to travel to destinations within the SMTD boundaries, and for certain medical appointments outside their service boundaries. Regular fare for adults (age 17 and over) is \$3.00 per ride. Residents aged 65 or over, disabled persons with certification and youth ages 5-16 ride for half fare. There is no fee for children under 7 with a paying adult, personal attendants or Veterans.
- RTHS educates our residents on the many aspects of our history through digital collections, live presentations and online programming. They are currently in the process of renovating the Robert J. Cross home, which will become a future museum located next to the Roscoe Township Community Center in Founders Park.

C. We have considered possibly offering the following social services or the following additional potential partnerships:

- Our new Community Center at Founders Park just opened in April of 2023. We have conducted online polling of our residents to determine what kinds of programs they are interested in and we are working on ways to provide those services. In just a few short months, we have hosted classes on gardening, scrapbooking, computer/phone classes, yoga, and monthly Game Days. Many of these activities have been led by volunteers of our community.
- We have also had various speakers on topics such as drug awareness and learning about Medicare. We continue to pursue these kinds of educational programming by partnering with other agencies to provide instruction on topics that are of interest to our citizens as reported in our surveys.

VII. Awards and Recognition

Our Township has received the following awards, distinctions, and recognitions:

- 2021 – Awarded a \$704,000 PARC Grant from IDNR to be used towards construction of a 3370sf Community Center
- 2022 – Awarded a \$337,300 OSLAD Grant from IDNR to be used towards construction of a multi-purpose pavilion, walking paths, and prairie restoration of approximately 15 acres of land

VIII. Intergovernmental Agreements

- A. Roscoe Township has an annually renewable Intergovernmental Agreement with Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD) to provide a dial-a-ride type service to our residents. The closest regular mass transit connections are approximately 4 miles to the south and 4 miles to the north. SMTD provides local transportation, in addition to connecting to the bigger transit systems. The annual cost of \$3000 for this service is paid from our General Fund

- B. We entered into an agreement with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to help guide us with restoring native prairie plantings on roughly 13 acres of land within our Founders Park development.

IX. Review of Laws, Township Policies, Township Rules and Procedures, Township Training Materials, and other Documents

We have reviewed the following laws, policies, and other documents applicable to the Township to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

- State laws applicable to Townships, including, but not limited to the Township Code (60 ILCS)
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)
- Policy on public comment – Roscoe Township maintains a written policy limiting speakers to 3 minutes. However, we often give residents quite a bit of free reign in expressing their concerns. We provide a comment period at the beginning of the meeting on any subject. We allow another comment period at the end of our meetings that are restricted to agenda items only.
- Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
Clerk Gary Blascoe is the Township OMA Officer
- All Elected Officials have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
- Schedule of All Township Regular Meetings for Fiscal Year (5ILCS 0/2.03)
- Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)
- Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
Clerk Blascoe is the FOIA Officer for the General Town / Highway Department. Assessor Cindy Servant is the FOIA Officer for the Assessment office.
- FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 40/4(b))
- List of Categories of FOIA Records under Township Control (5 ILCS 40/5)
- Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 20/2.06(d))
Has not been performed recently
- IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)

- Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1)
Policy written/approved by Board. Mary Ryan is the designated Official.
- All of our Elected Officials have filed statement of economic interests
(5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5)
- Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))
- Our Intergovernmental Agreements
- Our Social Service Agreements or Contracts
- Our budget and financial documents
- State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and
Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1)
- Our budget and financial documents
- Various publications regarding relevant government efficiency

X. Accomplishments

- Cemeteries – Roscoe Township has some of the best kept cemeteries in the area. In 2021, we began GIS based computerization of the records of our cemeteries to include GPS location, details of plot sales, ownership, burials and photos of markers
- Parks – We are constantly improving our parks. We maintain 3 playgrounds in 2 of our parks, along with baseball, soccer and football fields for our youth.
- Transparency – We post all of our meeting agendas to our website and Facebook page. All meeting minutes and packets are posted to our website along with our annual meeting schedule, parks information, cemetery information, financial audits, levies, budgets, contact info for all board members, information on FOIAs, assessments, and other pertinent information that a resident might want to access.
- Effective tax rate decreased from .1482 to .1338 since 2017, which results in a net effective tax rate of 1.5% of our residents' total property tax bill
- As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the day to day operations, and in addition to the policies, ordinances or resolutions referred to in Section IX, the Township has adopted these additional Ordinances, Resolutions, rules, policies or procedures:
 - Public Health Ordinance
 - Junk Yard Ordinance
 - Investment Policy
 - Park Usage and Rules
 - Long Term Plan
 - Snow Parking

XI. Inefficiencies Detected

- Park Rules Update – This document, created in 1991, was last updated in 2013.
- Lack of Completed Employee Handbook – Highway Dept and Assessor have short documents regarding policies/salary/vacation. Office personnel follow those policies in general.
- Review of closed session meeting minutes

XII. Plans to Correct Inefficiencies

- Update Park Rules Document
- Create an Employee Handbook
- Review closed session minutes and audio and consider for release

XIII. Roscoe Township Governmental Efficiencies

- We have zero debt.
- Roscoe Township runs quite efficiently in that we do not spend irresponsibly.
- Board members review all expenditures.
- Warrants are available for the Board of Trustees to view in a secured online storage location.
- All checks are signed by the Supervisor ONLY
- All checks are attested to by the Clerk, after the Board has approved the warrants and Supervisor has signed the checks.
- There is no duplication of services. We maintain the Township roads, our 3 cemeteries and 3 parks. We are responsible for the Township General Assistance Program and the Assessment of Property in the Township. While other municipalities may have parks, they belong to that municipality, and are maintained by same. The municipality road maintenance is separate also.

XIV. Our committee's recommendations regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency

Roscoe Township

- Develop and distribute an updated Employee/Policies Manual
- Review past Closed Session Minutes
- Update Park Rules document

Government-Wide

- **Intergovernmental Fees and Charges**

Governmental units should be discouraged or prohibited from profiting from other governmental units by charging local permit and inspection fees. Eliminating local permit fees in these situations is a way to reduce administrative costs without impacting overall public revenue.

- **Inefficiency of Other Governments**

Small governments are negatively impacted by the inefficiency of state and other local units of government. State grants are often overly complicated to apply for and staff at the state level is not routinely available to answer questions. Once funding IS received, cumbersome and time-consuming reports are due on a monthly or quarterly basis. These requirements are difficult for townships that have only part-time staff.

- **Unfunded Mandates**

Non-resident FOIA requests are becoming larger and more frequent, and often times appear to be data mining. The laws for these types of requests needs to be amended to either restrict the sheer amounts of data requested or allow more time for staff to respond without needing to seek legal advice, and incurring the costs associated with doing that.

Submitted by:

Bob Nowicki -Chairman, Decennial Efficiency Committee of Roscoe Township

Date: _____

ROSCOE TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT

XV. Intergovernmental Agreements

We partner with, or have Intergovernmental Agreements, with the following other Governmental Entities:

Entity	Services Offered
• Village of Roscoe	Boom Mowing
• Winnebago County	Road Chipping

XVI. Review of Laws, Township Policies, Township Rules and Procedures, Township Training Materials, and other Documents for Road District

We have reviewed the following, list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Township to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

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- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)
- Policy on public comment – Roscoe Township maintains a written policy limiting speakers to 3 minutes. However, we often give residents quite a bit of free reign in expressing their concerns. We provide a comment period at the beginning of the meeting on any subject. We allow another comment period at the end of our meetings that are restricted to agenda items only.
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XVII. Accomplishments

- The Roscoe Township Highway Department maintains 100 miles of road, the largest amount of miles amongst townships in Winnebago County.
- Since 2017, the tax rate has been lowered from .1808 to 1443.
- In 4 of the last 6 years, there was NO increase over the previous year’s levy.

XVIII. Inefficiencies Detected

- Employee handbook needs updating

XIX. Our committee’s recommendations regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency

Roscoe Township Highway Department

- Update our employee handbook
- Continue to seek out opportunities to work with other public works agencies to save tax dollars

Government Wide

- **Newspaper Publications**

The newspaper is no longer the most effective way to provide notice. Permitting townships to post notices to their websites would reduce costs.

Submitted by:

Bob Nowicki - Chairman, Decennial Efficiency Committee of Roscoe Township

Date: _____