

Otsego Lake Township

Policy #2025-10

Public Use of Township Facilities

Township Board Authority for Township Facilities

This policy governs the use of township-owned facilities by the public to ensure fair access, responsible use, and preservation of township property. The intent is to provide clear procedures for requesting, approving, and managing facility use in a manner consistent with township operations, safety, and community interests. Township facilities are public property, but they are not open to public use unless the Township Board has so directed. The Township Board shall determine which Township facilities will be open to public access and use, and the degree of public access and use.

General Provisions

- Township facilities are primarily for official township business. Public or private use may be permitted by the Township Board when it does not interfere with township functions or scheduled meetings.
- All approvals for facility use must not create a conflict of interest or appearance of endorsement by the township.
- The Township reserves the right to approve, deny, or revoke use requests based on availability, safety, and compliance with this policy.

Reservation Procedures

Facility Rental – The Township Hall, Lions Pavilion, Memorial Pavilion are available for rental as set forth in this policy.

Priority for facility use shall be as follows:

1. Official township meetings and functions.
2. Township boards, committees, and commissions.
3. Township-affiliated community or civic organizations.
4. Local non-profit groups or community events open to the public.
5. Private individuals or organizations for lawful purposes.

Use for purely commercial, political campaign, or discriminatory activities is not permitted.

An application must be submitted to the Township Clerk or designated official at least 14 days before the requested event. The application must state the name of the organization or applicant; contact information; the purpose of use; the date(s) and time(s) requested; number of attendees; equipment or setup requests.

The Township Board may establish a fee schedule by resolution to cover costs for cleaning, utilities, and wear. A refundable security deposit may be required to cover potential damages or cleanup costs. Fees may be waived for township-affiliated or non-profit community uses at the discretion of the Township Board.

Users must agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Township, its officers, employees, and agents from any claims, damages, or liabilities arising out of facility use.

Proof of liability insurance naming the Township as an additional insured is required unless waived by the Township Board.

Users must follow all fire, safety, and occupancy regulations. Alcohol, gambling, and smoking are prohibited unless expressly approved by the Township Board in accordance with applicable laws. Users are responsible for cleaning the facility after use and returning furnishings to their original arrangement. Damages or losses will be charged to the responsible party. Use must conclude by 10:00 p.m. unless otherwise approved by the Township Supervisor.

Hours of Business

The regular business hours of the Township Office are 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, and subject to review and change by the Township Board.

Public Meetings – Township facilities hosting a Public Meeting posted under the Michigan Open Meeting Act shall be open to the public a minimum of 15 minutes before the posted start of the meeting and closed as soon as practicable at the end of the meeting if held during other than Hours of Business.

Elections – The Township Clerk shall set the day(s) and hours that the designated Township Facility hosting an election will be open for an Election. The schedule shall comply with election requirements.

Emergency & Special Closing

The Township Supervisor shall have the authority to close the Township Office and/or limit access to and use of township facilities or property in extenuating situations. Extenuating situations include, but are not limited to, building safety, severe weather, failure of heating/mechanical systems, electrical failure or any unusual situation that would either prohibit the normal operation of the Township Offices, jeopardize the safety of the officials, employees, or public. In the event the Township Supervisor is unavailable, the Township Clerk shall have this authority.

Fire Department Property

The Township Fire Department property is first and foremost an emergency service facility, essential to public safety. To protect its assets and for the security and safety of the public, only authorized Fire Department personnel and Township Officials shall be allowed on Fire Department property. The Township Supervisor may authorize Fire Department Association Members, vendors, or members of the public to enter Fire Department property for approved events. Requests for authorized use must be submitted detailing the purpose, date, and time, and are subject to the Township Supervisor's approval based on safety and operational considerations.

Unauthorized entry or failure to comply with directions constitutes trespass on township property and may result in removal or enforcement action.

Non-Fire Department personnel and Township Officials are not allowed in or on any Fire Department vehicles, watercraft or equipment, except during special events with approval of the Township Supervisor.

Remi & Edna Schotte Memorial Park – Township Park

The Township Park shall be governed by a separate policy approved by the Township Board.

Cemetery

The Otsego Lake Township Cemetery shall follow the Cemetery Ordinance, as last amended.

Trailhead

The Trailhead is for the Iron Belle Trail. It provides parking and support facilities for those enjoying the trail. Overnight camping is not allowed. Use of the Trailhead by neighboring parcels or businesses is prohibited.

Open space on corner of Old 27 and Passenheim Road

This open space is not a park. It is private property owned by the Township and used for overflow parking for elections and other events at the Township Hall. Any use of the space must be approved by the Township Board.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy may result in the immediate revocation of facility privileges and forfeiture of deposits. The Township Board or its designee may deny future applications from individuals or organizations that violate any terms of this policy.

Policy #2025-10 was approved by the Township Board on November 20, 2025