

Cuba Township Decennial Committee on Local Government and Efficiency Act Report

In compliance with Public Act 102-1088 and using the guidance provided in the statute, the township formed a committee, evaluated current practices, identified efficiencies, and explored opportunities for greater efficiencies. The Decennial Committee was organized and approved on June 8, 2023, and the Decennial Committee's public meetings were held on the following dates:

- June 8, 2023
- October 12, 2023
- January 9, 2024
- April 9, 2024

The following report includes the committee's findings and recommendations for consideration. It was approved and submitted by the Cuba Township Decennial Committee on August 8, 2024.

Respectfully submitted by:

Christopher Karam, Supervisor
Highway Commissioner, Thomas J. Podgorski
Heidi Shannon, Clerk
Jill Talbot, Trustee
Tiffany Andreae, Trustee
Grant Born, Trustee
Thomas Kusmerz, Jr., Trustee
Allison Murray, Cuba Township Resident
Elizabeth Gaffney, Cuba Township Resident
Marvin Hill, Cuba Township Resident
Antonietta Simonian, Township Administrator

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Historical Background

The origin of township government in North America dates to the Pilgrims of 1636. Too often we take for granted the democratic freedoms enjoyed here in the United States, but we cannot forget that our forefathers came to the new world in search of political freedom. When they landed on American soil, they created the purest form of democracy known to the United States - the township. Township government, established in Providence, Rhode Island in 1636, is the oldest existing unit of government continuing to serve on the North American continent. Township government was in existence for 140 years prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The wording of the Declaration of Independence reflects the fact that 38 of its 56 signers had experienced the benefits of township government.

The Declaration's statement that "government should derive its just powers from the consent of the governed" is demonstrated at the Annual Town Meeting held on the second Tuesday of each April. The Annual Town Meeting is still an important function of our nation's 17,000 townships. The Illinois Constitution of 1848 gave voters in each county the opportunity to adopt Township Government. By 1850, the first township governments began operation. Today, 85 of Illinois' 102 counties operate under the township form of government and the 1,426 townships serve more than 8 million citizens.

Township government today operates under the same basic principles of democratic rule since its origination. The first townships established town meetings as the cornerstone of citizen input. Today, township government in Illinois still leans heavily on the annual meeting to give each and every citizen an opportunity to give direct input into the governing process. Townships in Illinois hold their annual meetings on the second Tuesday each April. Illinois township government today continues to provide the same basic services they did years ago.

The first annual town meeting was held at the dwelling of Noble R. Hays on April 2, 1850. The purpose of this meeting was to elect the town officers as law required. With a total of eighty-four votes cast, Philetus Beverly was declared the Supervisor of Troy Township, now Cuba Township. Noble R. Hays was sworn in as Clerk. A Special meeting of the Supervisors was held shortly after at the County Court House and lasted two days. At this meeting, Troy Township was informed that it must be renamed as this name was already used within the state of Illinois. The Township was renamed Cuba Township in what was believed to be an act of solidarity with Cuba in its effort to liberate itself from Spanish rule. This original meeting place now serves as the Cuba Township Highway Department offices.

Cuba Township is located in the far southwest corner of Lake County and is 24.2 square miles and 15,522 acres. Cuba Township is one of eighteen townships in Lake County and includes all (or parts) of eight municipalities including Barrington, Barrington Hills, Deer Park, Fox River Grove, Lake Barrington, North Barrington, Port Barrington, and Tower Lakes. The incorporated area is 65.82% of the township and the

unincorporated area is 34.18%. The Lake County Forest Preserve owns 964 acres or 6.23% of the property within the township.

Cuba Township and its communities offer cultural and economic diversity, a mix of housing, quality schools, excellent community facilities and a strong quality of life in a suburban area centered in a green belt of high-quality green space. Cuba Township villages provide a healthy community spirit, strong civic consciousness, and pride.

The 2020 population census indicates a total population of 17,292.

- Under 5 years of age: 3.4%
- Under 18 years of age: 20.7%
- 18 years of age and over: 79.3%
- 65 years of age and over: 23.6%
- Education: 65.9% of our residents have a bachelor's degree or higher
- Housing Units: 7,165

Committee Members:

Township Supervisor:	Christopher Karam
Highway Commissioner:	Thomas J. Podgorski,
Township Clerk:	Heidi Shannon
Township Trustee:	Jill Talbot
Township Trustee:	Tiffany Andreae
Township Trustee:	Grant Born
Township Trustee:	Thomas Kusmerz, Jr.
Township Resident:	Marvin Hill
Township Resident:	Allison Murray
Township Resident:	Elizabeth Gaffney
Township Administrator:	Antonietta Simonian

Committee Meeting

Organizational Meeting:	June 8, 2023
Second Meeting:	October 12, 2023
Third Meeting:	January 9, 2024
Fourth Meeting:	April 9, 2024

The Cuba Township office includes three (3) part-time employees and one (1) full-time General Town employee under direction of Supervisor Christopher Karam, and two (2) full-time and two (2) part-time Assessor employees under the direction of Assessor Nicole Knapik.

Functions of Illinois Townships

1. General Assistance – Townships provide food, general assistance and emergency assistance to individuals and families in need. Many townships operate food banks ensuring the necessities of life for their residents.
2. Property Assessment – The township assessor sets property values for all real property within the township. The township assessor is the only elected governmental official who must pass approved courses of instruction before standing for election to the office.
3. Road and Bridge Maintenance outside federal, state, and other local jurisdiction. Fifty-three percent of roads in Illinois are maintained by township government. Township highway commissioners are responsible for some 71,000 miles of Illinois roads. Township road crews are not only responsible for the maintenance of these roads, but they also keep them free of snow and ice in the winter months.
The Cuba Township Road District submitted a separate report.

General Information

The Offices of the Supervisor and Assessor are open Monday – Friday; 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

The township’s primary source of revenue are property tax and personal property replacement tax.

The Township Board passed an ordinance at the December 2023 meeting adopting the General Town Levy of \$1,128,000.

Elected Positions and Responsibilities

There are a total of 7 elected positions for the township: Assessor, Clerk, Supervisor and four trustees. Each elected position is held for a term of our (4) years and officials oversee the operation of the township. The compensation is determined for the entire term. The current compensation for the elected positions is as follows:

Position	Compensation
Supervisor	\$36,000
Clerk	\$20,000
Assessor	\$81,000
Trustees – (4)	\$8,000 (\$2,000 annually, paid by General Town Funds)

Supervisor’s Office

The Supervisor is a four-year elected position that serves as the Chief Executive Officer and Treasurer of the Township. By order of the Illinois General Assembly, the position serves as the Supervisor of General Assistance and is voting Chairperson of the Town Board and the ex-officio Treasurer of the road district’s funds.

The Supervisor’s Office currently employs one full-time and three part-time positions.

Cuba Township Provides the following services:

Cuba Township assists residents in crisis through general assistance, emergency assistance, a food pantry, and referrals for critical services to partners in the community. Cuba Cares Fund, a 501c3, provides funding for the Cuba Township food pantry expenses including the purchase of food, refrigeration systems, paper bags, gift cards, and other essential items deemed necessary for operating a food pantry. The Cuba Cares Fund's only source of revenue is donations from the general public, and local organizations. The pantry is operated primarily by volunteers and 1 part-time food pantry coordinator, paid by General Township funds. Fresh markets are offered each Tuesday from 10 AM – 1PM, to qualifying residents of Cuba Township. In addition, Cuba Township partners with St. Anne's Project Hope for Thanksgiving and Christmas meals offered by the local Jewel.

Cuba Township completes applications for LIHEAP, Nicor Sharing, Energy Aide, Shield of Caring and Emergency Assistance, Catholic Charities emergency assistance, RTA Senior/Disabled reduced fare permits and Benefit Access applications.

Cuba Township entered into social service agreements with Lake County Government for the COVID Housing Relief Program (CHRP) and Federal Emergency Rental Assistance (FERA) programs to provide housing and utility assistance programs to qualifying Cuba Township residents.

PACE transportation services for seniors and disabled are also available through Cuba Township's partnership with Barrington Township, PACE, and local municipalities including the Villages of Barrington, Lake Barrington, North Barrington, South Barrington, and Tower Lakes. PACE services are available Monday through Friday from 9 AM – 3:30 PM and the fare is \$2 each way. Cuba Township also offers a half-fare taxi program that subsidizes half of a taxi fare up to \$10.

Cuba Township promotes Lake County's Ride Lake County countywide paratransit service. However, at this time, Lake County's capacity continues to be a challenge.

Below is a list of our social service partners and providers:

Barrington Youth and Family Services – Counseling Services

Barrington Area Council on Aging (BACOA) – Senior services including Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), Income Tax Assistance, Meals with Wheels, Support Groups and Memory Screening

Catholic Charities – Emergency Assistance, Senior Services, and Diaper Program

Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Lake County – LIHEAP

Diaper Bank Partnership of Lake County – Infant, toddler and adult diapers

GiGi's Playhouse – Down Syndrome Achievement Center

Nicasa Behavioral Health Services – Addiction and Counseling Services

PACE Dial-A-Ride (Cuba and Barrington Township partnership) – PACE Dial-A-Ride partnership with Cuba and Barrington Township splitting 50/50 costs for ridership within the area and ensuring ridership capacity for our

far southwest corner of the County. Local municipalities financially contributing to the program include the Villages of Barrington, Lake Barrington, North Barrington, South Barrington, and Tower Lakes.

Prairie State Legal Services – Legal Services

RTA Rider Services Senior/Disabled Reduced Fare & Ride Free Permits and Metra Access pilot program

Salvation Army – Nicor Sharing, Energy Aide, Shield of Caring and Emergency Assistance

St. Anne’s Project Hope – Emergency Assistance and other holiday dinner partnerships

State of Illinois Benefit Access – Cuba Township promotes the program and provides application assistance.

Cuba Township offers passport processing for new applicants, handicap placards, township vehicle stickers, notary services, and voter registration. In addition, Cuba Township offers a **lending closet** with equipment including walkers, shower chairs, commodes, canes, knee scooters, rollators, wheelchairs, and crutches. There is no charge for use of these items.

Cuba Township is also committed to reducing waste in landfills by:

1. partnering with SWALCO to collect textiles and shoes,
2. partnering with the Lion’s Club to collect glasses and cases,
3. partnering with the local VFW to collect worn flags,
4. and partnering with local farmers to donate food waste for composting.

Cuba Township also contributes to the public safety of residents through the purchase and maintenance of nine (9) early warning weather/disaster sirens located throughout the township. The sirens were purchased nearly 34 years ago. Cuba Township maintains an intergovernmental agreement with Barrington Countryside Fire Protection District and the Lake Zurich Police Department for the testing and activation of the sirens. Cuba Township received a DCEO grant in 2022, 2023, and 2024, for the replacement of three warning weather/disaster sirens. Cuba Township is paying to replace an additional siren this year and continues to seek State funding to ensure all sirens are replaced in order to protect the public. In addition, Cuba Township provides **mosquito abatement services** through Clarke Environmental Mosquito Management, Inc.

Cuba Township is charged with oversight of White Memorial Cemetery. White Cemetery Association was first chartered in 1855 by Innis Hollister and Thomas White. Thomas White was believed to have settled in Cuba Township in 1844. How the cemetery property was used prior to the Association date is unknown. It may have been used as family plots or as some historians theorize, by military travelers. The earliest known grave is believed to be dated 1847. Some of the earliest known settlers that are buried at White include the Pomeroy, Rieke, Bennett and Kelsey families. It is the resting place of many veterans, the earliest being Francis Kelsey, who served as a naval captain in the War of 1812. When Cuba Township took ownership of the property in 1983, it was in a rundown state. The volunteer cemetery board has worked tirelessly over the decades to bring it back to the beautiful cemetery now named “White Memorial Cemetery”.

The cemetery employs no staff, and the day-to-day operations are managed by the Township Assessor, Nicole Knapik. Lawn maintenance is provided by the Cuba Township Highway Department staff, through an IGA. Seasonal maintenance is paid directly to a landscape vendor. The only source of income for the cemetery is

from new burials with 80% of these funds then being paid back directly to vendors for services rendered. The Township does not levy additional cemetery funds at this time.

Assessor's Office

The Assessor is an elected position with a four-year term. The Assessor must be certified by the state and meet the continuing education requirements. The Assessor has the responsibility of reviewing and valuing all property within the township's geographic boundaries. By state law, the assessed value placed on property must be one-third of the market value. All local bodies of government receive their revenue from taxes levied against the assessed property values. The property tax levy is the source of income for the township. While the Assessor determines the assessed value of properties, it should be noted that the Assessor does not determine or issue tax bills. That is the responsibility of the Lake County Treasurer's Office.

Cuba Township is comprised of approximately 15,522 acres of land split into approximately 8,976 parcels with an EAV (equalized assessed value) of approximately \$1,155,661,436 which equates to a total market value of \$3,467,331,041. These numbers are based on sales ratio studies performed at different levels by the County and State with the Assessor's role breaking down that value in an equitable manner among these parcels. The Assessor's primary responsibilities include:

- Maintaining proper individual property records.
- Processing property sales.
- Processing property improvement permits.
- Visiting properties to document improvements and update photos.
- Continuous review of sales trends.
- Closing books to publish assessments.
- Providing evidence to support valuations.
- Assisting residents with processing exemptions.

The duties within the office are managed by the elected assessor, two full-time staff, along with two part-time staff. The majority of work is confined to the boundaries of Cuba Township, however, staff participation in Lake County's Township Assessors Association affords the township an opportunity to share expertise among other townships. Cuba Township is one of five Lake County townships utilizing IMS as their CAMA software. IMS is recognized as a leader in providing residents easy access to check the accuracy of their property characteristics, and if property owners choose to appeal their Assessed value, the system offers easy and accurate sales and equity comparables. The website, www.IMSLake.org is available to the public. The Assessor's Office worked with the IMS team to offer the public easy access links to Lake County Government's website to access tax bill information, check exemptions, gather sale and equity comparables to file appeals, and utilize the GIS mapping system.

Township Clerk

The Township Clerk is an elected position with a four-year term. The clerk is tasked with maintaining the township records and is a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees. The responsibilities of the Office include transcribing the township meeting minutes, authenticating documents, administering oaths, issuing certificates, ensuring timely public notification of meetings, disposing of approved records, providing ballots to election judges, and submitting required reports on behalf of the Road District.

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

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Township to evaluate our compliance.

- ✓ State laws applicable to Townships, including but not limited to the Township Code (60ILCS 1)
- ✓ Illinois Open Meetings Act (ILCS 120)
- ✓ Policy on public comment
- ✓ Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05a)
- ✓ All Elected Officials have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS120/1.05b)
- ✓ Schedule of All Township Regular Meetings for Calendar or Fiscal Year (5ILCS 120/2.03)
- ✓ Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)
- ✓ Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5a)
- ✓ FOIA Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5b)
- ✓ Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5a)
- ✓ Posting Other Required FOIS Information (5ILCS 140/4a; 5 ILCS 140/4b)
- ✓ List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Township's Control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- ✓ Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06d)
- ✓ IMRF Total Compensation Posting (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- ✓ Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1)
- ✓ All Elected Officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/420/4A-101.5)
- ✓ Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Ordinance (775 ILCS 5/2-109C)
- ✓ Intergovernmental Agreements
- ✓ Budget and financial documents
- ✓ Gift Ban Ordinance
- ✓ Ethics Ordinance
- ✓ Compensation for Elected Official's Ordinance
- ✓ IMRF Participation Ordinance
- ✓ Permit for Public Assembly Ordinance
- ✓ Whistleblower Policy
- ✓ Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy
- ✓ Identity Protection Policy
- ✓ Loss Control Policy

- ✓ Expense and Reimbursement Policy
- ✓ Investment Policy
- ✓ Social Media Policy
- ✓ Electronic Participation
- ✓ Bill Paying Resolution
- ✓ Clerk Attestation

What Have We Done Well?

- In December 2023, Cuba Township passed a tax levy with no increase, continuing to provide quality services without increasing the cost to taxpayers.

Tax Year	Levy	% Inc Prior Yr	CPI
2023	\$1,128,000	0.00%	6.45%

- Cuba Township continuously seeks grant funding for the replacement of warning/disaster sirens, in an effort to ensure public safety utilizing state grant opportunities. To date, Cuba Township received state grants supplementing the cost of three sirens.
- Cuba Township utilizes nearly 10 volunteers for various tasks in the food pantry. This is a rewarding experience for volunteers and a savings to taxpayers.
- In 2021, Cuba Township reached out to SWALCO in a commitment to reduce waste in landfills. Both a textile bin and reuse-a-shoe program were initiated. Cuba Township recently broadened the relationship with SWALCO by offering free compost and seeds to residents.
- Cuba Township partnered with Lake County Government to provide COVID Housing Relief (CHRP) funds and Federal Emergency Rental Assistance (FERA) funds to local residents impacted by COVID. Approved CHRP and FERA funds provided rental and utility assistance.
- Cuba Township and the Cuba Township Road District tracked all COVID-related expenses and applied for reimbursement of the expenditures through an initiative with the Lake County Municipal League.
- Despite COVID, Cuba Township kept the lights on and the office open (with a limited staff) to ensure residents access to services including filing property exemptions, utilizing the outdoor food pantry, the lending closet, and obtaining handicap parking placards, to name a few.
- Cuba Township generates a Constant Contact monthly newsletter to residents who sign up at the office, online or at events. Reaching the entire township population on a monthly basis is a challenge. Every fall a hard copy newsletter is sent to each household listing upcoming events and services available throughout the year. Ensuring the website is current and user-friendly is also a priority.
- Cuba Township broadened our relationship with SWALCO offering free compost to residents this year.

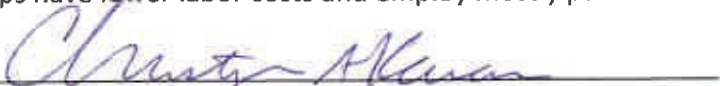
- Cuba Township expanded community outreach beyond our annual fall festival to include an Independence Day 5K/10K races in partnership with the Village of Barrington Hills. All race proceeds are donated to Folds of Honor, a 501c3, focused on educational support for the families of fallen veterans and first responders.
- Cuba Township conducted a survey earlier this year to measure the level of satisfaction of our residents. The survey reflected a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 77% (high satisfaction) for Cuba Township. The township remains committed to addressing the needs of our residents and utilizing an annual survey to measure the level of satisfaction with services and performance. Our goal is to see an increasing NPS score.

[Report Summary – Local Democracy and the Townships of Illinois: A Report to the People](#)

[Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments](#)

In preparing this report, we reviewed several studies on local government efficiency. These studies reflect the following:

- The average local government in Illinois serves 1800 residents compared to the national median of 2850 individuals.
- Most townships in Illinois have no bonded indebtedness. Together with road districts they are an integral element of local democracy. Township expenditures have grown at a lower rate than those of any other level of government since 1992.
- Townships have lower labor costs and employ mostly part time employees.

Submitted by: 
 Christopher Karam, Chairman
 Decennial Efficiency Committee of Cuba Township

Date: 8/9/2024