
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 24

October 2018



City of West Branch
121 N 4th St
West Branch, MI 48661
(989) 345-0500
cityhall@westbranch.com
www.westbranch.com

Events

October Farmers Market – every Saturday 8-2pm

31st – Downtown Merchants Trick or Treat; 31st – Optimist Club Trick or Treat

First United Methodist Church “Halloween Grab-n-Go” 4pm-8pm free sandwich and a drink
City Trick or Treat Hours- 6pm – 8pm Downtown Merchants 5-6

November

3rd Christmas Open House

24th Shop Small

December

8th – Christmas Parade, 15th – Christmas Fantasy;

For more detailed information, please visit the Chamber of Commerce page at www.wbacc.com then click Events.

Also, check out our postings for events on our website, Facebook page and channel 191 and sign up for “Remind” updates via text!

Fall is Here! Fall is Here! Fall is Here! Fall is Here! Fall is Here!

Dear City Residents,

Progress continues in the City of West Branch as we continue to benefit from our membership in Governor Snyder’s “Project Rising Tide” initiative. Individuals wishing to volunteer their services for this project are encouraged to speak with City Hall Office Assistant Bridget Charles or to email her at cityhall@westbranch.com to share with her any specific areas of community improvement you are most interested in volunteering for, including finding solutions for issues such as the availability of affordable, quality housing and/or child care, and much more.

Another area where improvements are occurring are in relation to our water system, including our water billing techniques. As City staff update equipment and software related to water meter reading and water bill calculation, we are hopeful that we can attempt to switch over from our current quarterly billing system to a system based on monthly water bill cycles. Our goal is to have this change occur in early 2019, though the exact date of the switch will depend upon many factors, including meter-reading equipment being updated in time. In addition, we hope to make this transition as smooth as possible for customers by easing folks into the change by first going from a quarterly bill to a two-month bill for one cycle, then switching to the one-month billing cycle that will continue to be utilized thereafter, as well as having a one-time extension on when water bills may be paid penalty free, so that people have time to adjust their household budgets to the new billing system.

On that same note, since the City is committed to providing high quality and safe drinking water, it is time for us to begin plans to start improving and replacing our aging water infrastructure throughout the City. Since such work always comes with a cost, it also means that City Council will be reviewing our current water rates, as well as the structure of our current water bill formulations, in an attempt to make our water billing mechanism more equitable for our customers, and also ensure that our annual revenues from water bills are sufficient to cover operation expenses as well as repairs, maintenance, and capital improvements.

Anyone interested in the discussion regarding the setting of water rates moving forward is strongly encouraged to attend a public hearing, which will take place at the beginning of Council’s first meeting in December, which is currently scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Monday, December 3rd. We never take these types of decisions lightly, and we always appreciate hearing ideas and feedback from the public on such matters, so all are encouraged to attend! Moreover, anyone with comments who is unable to attend the meeting is welcome to send Clerk John Dantzer their written comments either via mail or email (clerktreasurer@westbranch.com) in advance of the public hearing (or at any time really), and we will be sure that Council is able to review them.

Though the new water rates will not be finalized until after that public hearing in December, City Administration is nonetheless still able to provide City residents with examples of what their new water bill might look like based on projected figures that have been tentatively discussed during the past several City Council Work Sessions (keeping in mind that any such examples shown are merely projections based on a range of possible rates that have been discussed, but not yet approved). Simply stop by City Hall, call, or email any of our staff and we would be more than glad to assist you!

Sincerely, **Heather Grace, City Manager** ☺

City Council Members

Denise Lawrence – Mayor

Aaron Tuttle– Ward 1

Tim Schaiberger – Ward 2

Rusty Showalter – Ward 3

Dan Weiler – At-Large

Joanne Bennett– At-Large

Mike Jackson – At-Large

Council meetings are the 1st & 3rd

Monday’s at 6:00pm in the

Council Chamber at City Hall.

Please join us!

Hydrant Flushing

City Crews will be flushing hydrants between October 1st and October 12th. You may notice some discoloration let your tap run to clear the lines and avoid washing whites at this time if possible.

Farmers Market

Do not forget to visit the Farmers Market, located Downtown West Branch on S. 3rd Street, which continues to operate through October 28th every Saturday from 8am – 2pm. Enjoy fresh veggies, baked goods, handmade items and more! Get it Local & Get it fresh!

Brush Pick-Up

Brush Pick-up is on the **LAST MONDAY** of the month from March - November (weather permitting). The City will **NOT** accept full tree limbs, tree stumps and branches larger than 4" in diameter, entire trees, or extra-large quantities that amount to approximately an entire tree's worth of brush. We are set up to take only small amounts of trimming. Brush piles eligible for pick-up may be placed street side (though not to obstruct vision or road/foot traffic) during the 2 days before a scheduled pick-up date. Brush piles that either are ineligible for pick-up, because they are too large or are placed out too early/late, may result in a notice for removal—, which, if not complied with, may result in the pile being removed at the owner's expense (a bill for the costs of the removal, typically around \$150 or more, will result). For additional information, call City Hall at (989) 345-0500.

City Snow Policy

To help people get around safely this winter, the City asks all property owners to observe the following rules: Keep sidewalks free of snow and ice. City crews will clean sidewalks occasionally when large quantities fall (5" and more), but property owners remain responsible. Keep snow away from fire hydrants so they remain visible from all sides at all times. Do not pile snow on corners – this blocks views and causes accidents! Do not plow snow onto sidewalks, across or into city streets. Do not use a motor vehicle or ORV to plow snow on any city sidewalks. Your help is appreciated. Snow can create problems for all of us, but if we cooperate, we can at least deal with the problem in a safe manner. If city crews are used to correct problems, property owners will be billed for time and materials. In some cases, deliberate actions may constitute illegal activity – please report severe infractions to City Police.

Fall Leaf Pickup

Fall leaf pickup will be October 22-November 30. Rake leaves to curb during these pick-up dates and DPW will pick them up.

Water/Sewer Customers

Per resolution from City Council, the water/sewer *shut off Notice, Turn off, and Turn on Fees* have been increased to **\$50.00** each.

REMINDER! You must pay water/sewer bills on separate checks than taxes.

Council Minutes & City Charter / Ordinances

Minutes from the City Council meetings, as well as the City Charter & Ordinances can be found on-line at www.westbranch.com.

Information/Concerns

Any citizen who has concerns, needs information or wants to discuss City related issues, please feel free to stop by City Hall or call City Manager Heather Grace at 345-0500. Your input and concern regarding our City is much appreciated as we all need to work together to make West Branch the best City we can!

Important Info:

West Branch City Police – 130 Page Street (near Little League Fields). Residents who are aware of a suspicious situation need to **dial 911 immediately** – not the next day or hours later! The West Branch City Police Department is here to serve YOU!

Garbage Pickup – is normally on Wednesdays each week, except holidays. The week with a holiday garbage will be delayed by one day. You are allowed two large items every week. Large items will be picked up between Wednesday and Friday. Republic is asking that if you put large items out you call them to schedule a pick up. *If you experience any issues with your garbage service, please call Republic Services at 1-800-438-0966.* Please do NOT call City Hall with garbage service related issues until you have first tried to resolve your issue by contacting Republic, as Republic has been contracted to handle all customer service issues. If Republic's customer service hotline fails to handle your concern, please contact Republic customer service supervisor Gary Hicks directly at GHicks@republicservices.com. Thank you.

Recycling Center- located on Lucas Lane between N 4th & N 5th Streets. Hours are Tuesdays from 2pm – 6pm and Saturdays from 9am – 1pm. **Please do NOT leave items when attendant is not there!**

DROP BOX – City Hall has a drop box on the wall next to the front door. You may use it to drop off tax or water bill payments. We check it every day. Please do not deposit cash in the drop box.

Services Offered by the City

- ❑ **Channel 191 - WBTV & www.westbranch.com**- both are currently working to get it updated and improved!
- ❑ **Credit Card Payments** - The City can now accept credit card payments at City Hall and our website www.westbranch.com. Service fees are paid by the payee 3% or \$2.00 minimum per transaction.
- ❑ **Automatic Withdrawals** – Never have a late fee or shut off notice again! You may set up an automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings account to pay water/sewer or tax bills. Stop by City Hall for more information.