



# G.A.P.S. Newsletter

Gerrish Alternative Policing Strategies

"Community with Police...Caring & Sharing Together"

JANUARY 2023

From our Family to Yours...  
Wishing you a Happy and  
Healthy New Year!!



## A LOOK BACK AT 2022...

Although we were able to get back to a more "normal" year in 2022, we still experienced a lot of changes within our Department and our Township.

We still ran one officer short for the entire year right up to the first part of December when our newest officer graduated from Kirtland Regional Police Academy and completed our seventh full-time officer position.

We hired Officer Andrew Taylor on April 2nd to fill a vacant position from the September 2021 departure of a full-time officer only to have Lt. Greg Patchin retire after 30 years of service on June 10th, 2022.

This brought about a change in our administrative and command structure as a promotional process took place in June to replace Lt. Patchin's position. Officer Eric Muszynski was recommended for the position to Chief Hill by an oral board panel and was in turn recommended to the Gerrish Twp. Board by Chief Hill on June 14th as the new Lieutenant for a 180-day probationary period. On December 13th, Lt. Muszynski's status was changed to permanent elevation by the Gerrish Twp. Board.

In August, our newest department member was hired as a full-time police cadet through a sponsorship program with the Gerrish Twp. Police Department and Kirtland Community College. John Ellis joined our team as our most recent full-time officer upon the completion and graduation from the Kirtland Regional Police Academy on December 2nd thus putting our Department at full staff for the first time in over three years. (You can read more about Officer Ellis on the second page of this

Newsletter.) All of these changes brought about a lot of training, mentoring and working together, which will continue to occur well into 2023.

Not only did our Department and staff see changes, the Gerrish Twp. Board changed with the resignation of both the Clerk and the Treasurer in April and July respectively. Long time Clerk Kathleen Patchin was replaced by the current Clerk Michelle Squires and Treasurer Leasa Tulgetske was replaced by the current Treasurer Larry Kruger. This brought about a plethora of training in those positions and also added an element of inter-departmental administrative knowledge sharing between the Police Department and those newly appointed board members. Lt. Muszynski continues on his course of leadership and administrative training and Sgt. LaBonte and senior Officer John Wybraniec continue the Field Training Program for our new officers in addition to the required Department and State mandated training that occurs often throughout the year. We as a team have put in the extra effort over the past years and will continue to do so to provide the most effective and professional service to our community that we can.

We know that the only thing constant in life is change and we have and will continue to embrace change not only within our Department and Township but in our State and Nation with positive attitudes and hopeful hearts for a bright 2023.

*"Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future."*

- John F. Kennedy

## UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS:

**JANUARY 13th**

ACT NOW Executive Board Meeting  
10:00 am @ Gerrish Twp. Police Dept.

**JANUARY 21-22, and 28-29**

**Tip Up Town USA**

**Houghton Lake, MI**

**Check out their  
Facebook Page  
for a list of  
scheduled  
events**



**TIP UP TOWN USA**



## DRUG DROP BOX

In November, we took back 107 pounds of drugs from our Drug Drop Box to Petoskey Public Safety Department for proper incineration disposal in coordination with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.

Since we installed our newest drug drop box in October of 2019 we have collected and disposed of 423 pounds of unused and unwanted drugs.

Our box is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is located just outside of the front door of our police department building. You do not need to remove pills from containers as everything gets securely transported by police officers in taped up boxes and then the boxes get incinerated. If you do wish to remove pills from containers, please put them in a plastic bag, do not empty loose pills into the box as this makes the collection process difficult.

Permanent drug drop boxes are a convenient way to safely dispose of unused and expired medications. Stored in a medicine cabinet, these medications can be misused by your family, friends, and other visitors to your home. Thrown in the trash, these medications can fall into the hands of people who have no medical use for them. Flushed down a toilet or poured down a drain, these medications can contaminate our water supply.

That's why we encourage you to dispose of these medications year-round at a permanent drug drop box. Bringing unused and expired medications to a permanent drug drop box protects you, your family, and your community.

## WELCOME TO THE TEAM...



Introducing our new  
Officer JOHN ELLIS...  
Officer Ellis joined our  
Department on Aug.

8th as a Sponsored Cadet in training and attended the Kirtland Community College Regional Police Academy and graduated on December 2nd. He was immediately sworn in as a full-time officer with the Gerrish Twp. Police Department on that same afternoon. John grew up in Allen Park, Michigan, spending his summers visiting his grandparents on Higgins Lake. John and his family moved to Gerrish Township in 2017. He worked as a Correctional Officer for the Roscommon County Sheriff's Department before joining the Gerrish Twp. Police Department.

John is trained in Firearms, Pepper Spray, Standardized Field Sobriety Testing and PBT Operator, Speed Measurement, Behavioral Health Emergencies and First Aid/CPR/AED. He is currently in our Field Training Program and will be working closely with Sgt. LaBonte and Officer Wybraniec over the next several weeks to complete his FTO program. This is an in-depth training with modules covering on-the-job training tasks ranging from traffic stops to investigations, geographic orientation, township ordinances, reports, LEIN/SOS look-ups and our RMS (Records Management System). In his off-time, John enjoys spending time with his family outdoors off-roading, snowmobiling, skiing, hiking, camping and hunting are some of their favorite activities.

Officer Ellis will be formally sworn-in and have his badge pinning at the regular Gerrish Twp. Board meeting on January 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

If you see Officer Ellis, please welcome him to our team! He looks forward to serving the community that he has loved his whole life.



**Friday and Saturday  
February 17 & 18, 2023  
At beautiful Higgins Lake**