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**PENTWATER**  
STAY FOR A DAY, A WEEK, A LIFE

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# Community Newsletter

August 27, 2025



## Thank You, Pentwater.

At the latest council meeting, the Village Council accepted my resignation as Village Manager.

The decision to leave was not easy and I will sincerely miss the staff and community I have had the pleasure of working with during my tenure. The Village of Pentwater is an incredible community with deep passion, and beautiful visions for the future. During my time as manager, we accomplished many important tasks such as:

- Hiring a DPW Supervisor to ensure our infrastructure and assets are properly cared for.
- Enforcing the Village's code of ordinances that have been in place for years.
- Revising obsolete operations policies.
- Training new staff members and introducing them to the community.
- Providing important maintenance to the Village Water and Sewer Systems.
- Beginning a Capital Improvement Plan to help guide future project needs.
- Improving public safety through parking changes, signage, and a new guardrail.

On top of these items, we have worked diligently on a \$7 million water project that will add additional water capacity and redundancy, we are working with EGLE

to determine upcoming needs at our Waste Water Treatment Plant, are working with the USACE on the Pentwater Channel, creating a sidewalk repair program, and are working on a number of other initiatives to ensure the Village is heading into the future strong, including Michigan Leadership Institute on a Strategic Plan.

In my resignation letter to council, I expressed to them my complete and full confidence in the Village staff. I am leaving the Village confident that the team in Village Hall will continue moving the Village to a long and prosperous future. They are skilled, dedicated, and eager to learn/do more than has previously been done. I personally believe the Village is blessed to have this team in place.

To ensure a smooth transition, one of the members of the team, Toby Van Ess, will be stepping into the interim manager role. Toby currently serves as Zoning Administrator and has helped us establish our first official code enforcement program. He has extensive experience with municipal management and was appointed as interim unanimously at the council meeting on August 25<sup>th</sup>.

Lastly, I want to thank the community of Pentwater for their support throughout my tenure. You are what make this Village so special and I look forward to seeing Positively Pentwater continue to prosper!

*Rachel Witherspoon*

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## Interim Manager, Toby Van Ess

I would like to take a minute and introduce myself and give a brief history of my background. I was born and raised on the west side of Grand Rapids but spent every summer of my life between Ludington and Pentwater. Our family had a summer home on Hamlin Lake and my wife and I have had a few different cottages in the area including one right here in Pentwater. In fact rumor on the street is that I may have walked the homecoming parade as a clown quite a few years back!

Most of my work history includes several businesses in the Grand Rapids area until around 2020 when my wife and I decided to move "up north" for a slower lifestyle. Local government started as a family love way back as my grandmother was city of Walker treasurer

for over twenty years. I got involved in my community starting out as a planning commissioner, ZBA member then elected as a township treasurer and finally a township supervisor for twelve years. I have over 20 years of local government and truly enjoy serving the public.

In April of this year, I began my employment here at the Village of Pentwater as your zoning administrator and am thankful for the trust the village council has in me to step into the role of Interim Village Manager. Rachel Witherspoon has done a fabulous job here and I look forward to continuing the direction she has created. Staff and I look forward to assisting you in anything we can help with concerning the village. Feel free to stop by anytime to chat or say 'Hi' and even though my given name is James, please call me Toby, it is a long story. I look forward to meeting as many as I can personally as together, we keep Positively Pentwater moving forward into the future.

*James "Toby" Van Ess*



## Water & Sewer Rates

The Village Council recently approved new water/sewer rates effective October 1<sup>st</sup>. These new rates were established to bring both funds out of their persistent deficits and account for the additional debt from the DWSRF project. Infographics will be shared soon explaining the new rate structure/amount.

### **Water Rates**

Base Rate: \$144.27

Use Fee (per 1,000 gallons): \$3.50

### **Sewer Rates**

Base Rate: \$174.03

Use Fee (per 1,000 gallons): \$4.20

## Protect Our Sewers

The Department of Public Works have been working to maintenance our sewer systems and have found many concerning items in the pipes that are affecting operations.

Please be advised that the sewer system is not designed to handle rags, flushable wipes, fat, oil, or grease. The addition of these items increases maintenance costs, reduces the longevity of the system, causes backups, and ultimately, increases the cost of operating the system.

Please take care of our system so that it can always be there when you need it!