

## Village Snow Removal Priorities

February 14, 2018

To Village Residents and the Community:

Each winter season we receive at least one complaint from a village resident that states the sidewalks are not being maintained properly jeopardizing the safety of our residents, especially children and the elderly who depend on them. I must agree with those who complain that at times the sidewalks are not free of snow and they do jeopardize the user's safety. However, allow me the courtesy to explain how winter snow removal works.

We have a three man Department of Public Works (DPW) who is responsible for snow removal as well as taking care of our water system, sewer system, and ground maintenance of all the public property within the Village limits. They also repair and maintain the equipment that is used to perform these tasks.

Come winter, when it snows, the first priority for our DPW is to make sure all streets and roads within the Village are plowed allowing for safe travel for those who must leave home for work or other responsibilities. Depending on the quantity of snow determines the time required to clear the roads.

Once the roads are cleared the DPW can address the sidewalks. WE have a tractor with a snow blower that is used for this purpose. If all goes well, and there are now equipment malfunctions, water lines or sewer breaks requiring immediate attention then the sidewalks are cleared.

If there is prolonged snowfall, over many days, the streets and roads are still the priority but as snow accumulates then more time is required to move it and remove it so the process is not disrupted and tomorrow's snowfall can be cleared. This practice also depends on the business owners in the downtown maintaining the sidewalks in front of their stores so their customers can access their businesses. The DPW will remove the snow piles on the curbs as time allows.

The DPW does their best to get this work done within an 8 hour day. There are times however, when an 8 hour day is not enough and they have to work overtime just to keep the streets and roads cleared let alone taking care of other issues that may arise.

Each year we have to budget for all that the DPW takes care of. A hard winter with lots of snow and cold puts pressure on the budget to the point where something has to give. Quite often the sidewalk maintenance is that something.

We have not raised millage rates in the Village for nearly 20 years and as long as I am president we will do all we can to keep from raising millage rates. The only solution that would insure the sidewalks are maintained in a timely manner is to hire another DPW employee that would help

perform all that is required of them. That would require raising taxes to pay for that individual. As I said, as long as I am here, I would rather sacrifice untimely sidewalk snow removal than raise taxes and hire an additional DPW employee.

God forbid anyone suffer an injury from our inability to maintain the sidewalks in a timely manner. It is winter in northern Michigan and we all understand that it requires all of us to be more cautious as we drive, walk, and go about our daily business.

Thank you all for your concerns and I assure you we will do our best to serve everyone's interest within the constraints of our budget. The Village Council, the DPW, the Police Department, and the Clerk/Treasurer are dedicated to provide the best service you deserve as residents of this beautiful community.

Larry Eckhardt  
Central Lake Village President.