



educational sessions

Our educational sessions are designed for township elected and appointed officials and your entire township team, from communities of all sizes. The sessions will enhance your knowledge, skills and effectiveness as a leader, regardless of your level of experience. Topics address statutory duties, and a variety of concepts, trends and current issues in township government. **Virtual conference** sessions are denoted with a  (live-streaming assistance provided by Shumaker Technology Group); those with an **advocacy** focus with a .

Schedule is subject to change. Additional sessions will be added; watch MTA publications and website, and consult your program on-site for the final schedule.

Tuesday, April 26

Concurrent Educational Sessions

10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Building a Better Relationship with Your Assessor

Now more than ever, it's critical for township board members to have an effective working relationship with your assessor. You can help clear those communication channels by communicating expectations. Who do they report to? How and when do they meet with the board for reports or updates? Communication is central to an effective relationship. Get ideas for building a stronger relationship with your assessor and walk away with insights into assessment administration in your township.

Speaker: Shila Kiander, Michigan Advanced Assessing Officer, Director, Mecosta County Equalization

Building, Rebuilding & Maintaining Public Relations

Have you ever had to talk to the media? What about the public? Board members or staff? The answers are surely yes, yes and yes! So, did you walk away feeling good about those interactions? We recognize it can be challenging, especially when times get tough! Gain insights into how these conversations shape the public's opinion of not only you, but your entire township. Take away techniques to leave a good impression and enhance these working relationships.

Speaker: Michael Selden, MTA Director of Member Information Services

Dealing With Conflicts of Interest, Ethics & Difficult Board Members

Members of boards, commissions and committees have varied backgrounds and relationships, which must be dealt

with when the public body takes actions. Learn how to avoid and deal with ethical issues, difficult board members and properly disclose conflicts to the satisfaction of the community.

Speakers: Representatives from Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

Insights from Inside the Capitol

With the second year of the 100th Legislature underway, learn firsthand the priorities that the governor and the Legislature hope to achieve this year. What policy and budget issues are in store, how is the state utilizing federal COVID-19 relief dollars and what is the effect for townships, and what relevance will the upcoming 2022 elections and new legislative districts have on issues? How will federal Infrastructure and Investment Act funds benefit Michigan and townships? Discover the answers to these questions and more, including how they may impact your community and its residents. Don't miss this opportunity to identify the issues and challenges of today's political landscape, as well as how you can influence both current and emerging issues.

Speakers: MTA Government Relations Staff

Putting Economic Development to Work in Your Township

Whether urban or rural, each township has its own objectives and challenges when it comes to economic development. Gain insights into reimagining and redeveloping formerly abandoned and other challenging properties. Learn about resources and partnerships available from the state, including how they have worked successfully in both urban and rural environments. Delve into project development perspectives, including support, incentives and partnerships needed at every level of government.

Moderators: Neil Sheridan, MTA Executive Director; and John Stewart, Trustee, Plymouth Charter Township (Wayne Co.)

Panelists: Kurt Heise, Supervisor, Plymouth Charter Township (Wayne Co.) and former State Representative; Emily Doerr, Director, Michigan Land Bank; Lisa Leedy, Director, Grand Traverse Economic Development; and Jason Biber, Principal, Hillside Investments

Small Box Discount Retailers & Big Dollar Zoning Issues

Small box discount retailers—aka “dollar stores”—are significantly impacting local economies, particularly small businesses and local grocers. Get an overview of the economic impact, industry expansion strategies, how this industry growth limits access to healthy food options for low-income families by edging out grocers and what municipalities in other parts of the country are doing. Then we'll focus on zoning options townships can adopt to address discount retailer growth, as well as the related opportunities, risks and complications such zoning changes may bring about.

Speaker: Michael Homier, Shareholder, Foster Swift

So, You Want to Be a Charter Township

What are the differences between general law and charter townships? Get an overview of the structure and authority of both types of townships and insights on how to incorporate as a charter township. Learn the impact on annexation and get a better understanding of the role of the State Boundary Commission.

Speaker: Seth Koches, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber & Kaufman, PC

The Pursuit of Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership emphasizes building legitimacy through honest relationships. It's about putting the needs of community above self. Isn't that why you chose to serve? Recapture that enthusiasm, be mindful of how others see you, and walk away with positive approaches to building trust, transparency and keeping it real.

Speaker: To be announced

What Every Township Should Know About Budgeting

All elected officials play an important role in budget preparation. Get an overview of what the law requires, the importance of cash flows and practices associated with “one time” inflows like the American Rescue Plan Act funds. You’ll walk away with a much better understanding of how it all impacts your annual budget.

Speakers: Jeff Anderson, Regional Director, Michigan CLASS and former Delta Charter Township (Ingham Co.) Finance Director/Deputy Treasurer; and Karen Lancaster, CPA, CPFPO, Governmental Finance Consultant, The WoodHill Group and former City of Ann Arbor Finance Director

You Said What? Navigating Employee Speech Rights

In an age of oversharing on social media and fiery political disagreements, townships are under more pressure than ever to monitor township employee speech and take action when that speech presents their township in a bad light. But township employees don’t check their First Amendment rights at the door. Navigating the complicated and often frustrating issues related to employee speech can land even seasoned township officials into hot water. Join us for a discussion about the ins and outs of township employee free speech rights to avoid having your township end up on the wrong end of the headlines.

Speakers: Representatives from Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

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Concurrent Educational Sessions 1 to 2:15 p.m.

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Act Local, Think Global: How Your Township Can Address Climate Change

Townships face unique climate change challenges. The good news is that you have the power and resources to help reduce global climate change. Explore the challenges facing your township and learn collaborative strategies you can be a part of to take positive climate action and make a difference in your community.

Speaker: Dr. Denise Keele, Political Science and Institute of the Environment & Sustainability, Western Michigan University, Chair, Climate Change Working Group, and Coordinating Chair, Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition

American Rescue Plan Act: Who’s Spending Money on What?

American Rescue Plan funds are flowing into communities across Michigan, bringing a substantial infusion of resources to help turn the tide on the effects of the pandemic. While uses vary, one thing is clear: these resources provide an opportunity for you to invest in your township. Hear how municipalities across the state are putting their funds to use.

Speaker: Tim Dempsey, Vice President, Public Sector Consultants

Assessing Forms & Functions

In assessment administration, forms are how data is reported. There are a lot of forms, and your board should be aware of most of them and what they mean. Why? Because these forms pass through many hands on your township team ... your assessor, treasurer, board of review, supervisor and even your residents. Get an overview of forms, applications and resolutions that relate to assessment administration in your township.

Speaker: Shila Kiander, Michigan Master Assessing Officer, Director, Mecosta County Equalization

Best Practices for Townships for Complying with ADA & Fair Housing Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) prohibit townships from discriminating against individuals on the basis of disability and making zoning decisions that fail to reasonably accommodate persons with a disability. However, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and local ordinances traditionally do not provide standards or procedures for considering and granting such zoning accommodations. Review requirements and best practices for compliance under the ADA and FHA to properly address requests for zoning accommodations.

Speakers: Leslie Abdo and Kaitlyn Manley, Attorneys, Foster Swift

Employment Law Update

Even one employee can create employment issues. Get an overview of what you need to know when it comes to your township hall as a workplace. From implementation of the new Fair Labor Standards Act exemption change to problematic personal relationships, we’ll offer insights to keep your township

out of hot water. Learn more about hot-button employment issues such as whistleblower, sex discrimination and “me too” developments.

Speaker: Karen Kienbaum, Founder and Principal, The Kienbaum Law Group, PC and JustUs® Programs

Joint Effort: Township Administration of Marijuana

The legalization of recreational marijuana in Michigan came with confusion, but some townships saw opportunity. Each municipality has the right to allow or restrict adult-use/recreational sales, but what if you took it one step further? Hear how one township took advantage of this budding industry and put the application fees to work in their township.

Speakers: Catherine Kaufman, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber & Kaufman, PC; and Rich Glista, Marijuana Administrator, and Matt Sanborn, Marijuana Clerk, Lawrence Township (Van Buren Co.)

The Health of Michigan Democracy: Insights from Township Officials

For more than 10 years, township officials from across the state have provided their assessment of the health of democracy at the federal and state levels, and within their own communities, in a University of Michigan survey. Results include their confidence in a wide range of political and social institutions here in Michigan, including the media, criminal justice system, elections and more. Learn how these insights reflect in the tone of discussion and communication that takes place around local policy issues, the general state of public discourse and relationships between board members, both with each other and the public.

Speaker: Dr. Debra Horner, Project Manager, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, University of Michigan

Touch Base with Treasury

From payment options to navigating online information and resources, learn the latest from the Michigan Department of Treasury. Get a review of the most common questions related to payments, tips on accessing the Elite system, guidance on numbered letters and the chart of accounts, and more.

Speakers: Representatives from the Michigan Department of Treasury

Understanding & Managing Conflict

Conflict is unavoidable. It can be a sign of a need for change and an opportunity for improvement. By gaining a better understanding of the causes and drivers of conflict, you can learn to manage and even leverage it. This session offers tools for resolving conflict and insights into how you can use it to build trust with your board and your community.

Speaker: Mary Gladstone-Highland, MPA, CFRE, CNP, Founder, Spark Group Consulting

Watch Out! Public Water Class Action Lawsuits are a Real Threat

Imagine your township being hit with a class action lawsuit seeking a refund of all the utility fees paid by the system's users going back as far as six years. In recent years, this is exactly what has happened to dozens of communities in Michigan. For some communities, the refunds being claimed are in the tens of millions of dollars. Learn what to look out for and the sorts of things your township can do to lower the risk of falling victim to one of these lawsuits.

Speaker: Steven Joppich, Shareholder, Rosati Schultz Joppich & Amtsbuechler, PC

Concurrent Educational Sessions

2:45 to 4 p.m.

Anatomy of a Bulletproof Zoning Decision

How can you ensure that your township's zoning decisions survive legal scrutiny? Join us as we explore different types of zoning decisions including the timing, noticing, the decision and its appeal potential. Gain insights into procedural and legal elements related to requests for rezonings, special land uses and planned unit developments.

Speakers: Catherine Kaufman, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber & Kaufman, PC; and Andy Moore, AICP, Williams & Works

Cybersecurity & Your Township

Bad actors don't have to live in your community to be a threat. The threat of cyber-attacks continues to grow and the impact can be devastating. Learn how to recognize and reduce risk and add another layer of security to your township's digital information.

Speakers: To be announced

Faster, Better, Cheaper:

Leading Innovative Townships

New challenges and opportunities for your community develop every year. Residents and stakeholders expect your leadership in finding workable, effective solutions. Learn the strategies and framework for leading innovation that works while staying within legal boundaries, and hear more about MTA's new Innovative Township Awards coming this year.

Speakers: Neil Sheridan, MTA Executive Director, and Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Staff Attorney

Foreclosure Prevention Options

The impact of tax foreclosure goes beyond the homeowner and can blight your community. Preventing foreclosure stabilizes neighborhoods, maintains property values, mitigates health issues, and reduces the burden on other taxpayers for government services. Gain insights into tax foreclosure prevention options helping your township residents stay in their homes.

Speaker: Catherine McClary, Treasurer, Washtenaw County

Funding Township Road Improvements

Learn what options are available to your township to fund and finance road improvements. Explore funding through road millages, special assessments and voter-approved bonds. The options, and benefits, of partnering with your road commission will also be discussed.

Speaker: Steven Mann, Attorney, Miller Canfield

Gathering Input: Squeaky Wheel or General Consensus

We all know "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." But how can you be certain that what you're hearing is the direction the board should take? Perhaps you're only hearing from one board member or a small contingent of your community. We'll analyze a variety of situations to help you determine whether you're facing a problem or a squeaky wheel, and provide tips on how to address both.

Speaker: Cindy Dodge, MTA Member Information Services Liaison

Impact of Legalized Marijuana on Your Township & Public Workplace

Review the basics of marijuana laws and the impact of marijuana use by township employees (including appointed officials) in the performance of their duties and on their own time. Learn how state and

federal employment laws are impacted, drug testing policies, pitfalls for the township board as an employer, tips for handling situations, and how case law is evolving around these new issues.

Speaker: Steven Joppich, Shareholder, Rosati Schultz Joppich & Amtsbuechler, PC

Insights from the State Tax Commission

Get an update on assessing reform, an overview of essential services assessment topics and much more at this lightning round of the State Tax Commission's "Key Topics for Assessors" course. Get your questions answered by the experts!

Speakers: David Buick, Executive Director, State Tax Commission; and Will Gast, Kari Miles and Sean Mulchay, Property Services Division, Michigan Department of Treasury

Partners for Placemaking

Townships across the state are partnering with local trail groups and land conservancies, creating a sense of place that benefits their community and contributes to prosperity in Michigan. By combining expertise in community engagement, outdoor recreation and land management, nonprofit partners are helping townships build vibrant communities, support local economies, and create attractive places to live, work and play. Learn how your township can innovate and collaborate on trail and open space projects big and small.

Speakers: Representatives from Michigan Trails & Greenway Alliance and Heart of the Lakes

Informational Sessions

4:30 to 5:15 p.m.

The Inside Scoop on County Chapters

MTA county chapters provide an opportunity for township officials to discuss common problems and more. All members are invited to attend and learn how county chapter members across the state maximize their meetings.

Moderator: Cindy Dodge, MTA Member Information Services Liaison


YOLO: Early Career Officials Meet-up

You've been elected or appointed to serve your township earlier in your career path. Congrats! Meet others who have chosen public service and share your objectives, learning approach, challenges and wins. All those interested in participating in these discussions are welcome.

Facilitator: Neil Sheridan, MTA Executive Director


Wednesday, April 27

Concurrent Educational Sessions
10:15 to 11:30 a.m.


Insights from Inside the Capitol 
Repeated from Tuesday at 10:15 a.m.
Speakers: MTA Government Relations Staff

Is a Social District Right for Your Township
Social districts allow municipalities to designate a common area where alcohol purchased by a social district licensee may be consumed off-premises, within designated areas. Establishing these districts requires many considerations, such as the area(s) designated, adoption of application, maintenance and management plans, traffic control, and public safety and enforcement. Learn more about establishing a social district, including what's not covered by statute but must be considered to manage and maintain a beneficial, but safe, social district in your township.
Speaker: Sarah Gabis, Attorney, Foster Swift

Leverage Antennas in Rights-of-Way to Drive Economic Growth & Become a Connected Community
Wireless providers have been aggressively pursuing the expansion of 5G networks, causing a cascade of federal and state regulation to remove barriers and clear the way for wireless technology to connect township residents. With proper regulation, townships can mitigate the negative impacts by imposing design guidelines and yet benefit from the economic advantages of being a connected, forward-thinking community. Learn how to establish a set of regulations to address wireless infrastructure before it is deployed and you lose your say.
Speakers: Representatives from Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

Relevant Leadership 
Relevance equals influence. Influence doesn't happen by chance or circumstance—not in today's world. It happens by design. It takes relevant leaders practicing extraordinary people skills. How we connect through communication determines our level of influence. Learn techniques for creating a balance between credibility and relatability to strengthen your relationships and take away tips for

developing and nurturing honest, effective communication.
Speaker: Ty Bennet, 2022 Conference Keynoter

Staying in Your Lane 
Explore the roles of your township's planning team to put the power of collaborative decision-making to work in your township. We'll review the purpose of your master plan, including how it relates to other plans and your ordinances. You'll come away with a better understanding of each player's role and a "to do list" to help them be successful.
Speakers: Representatives from the Michigan Association of Planning

The Dreaded Open Meetings Act
Don't pass this session by because you think it's just another class on the Open Meetings Act (OMA). This act is by far the most asked about law that townships encounter. While there aren't typically changes to the OMA, it's still one of the most misunderstood (and important) laws and every township board and public body must ensure compliance. Understanding it can keep both YOU and your township out of trouble.
Speaker: Michael Selden, MTA Director of Member Information Services

The "New Normal": COVID-19's Lasting Impact on Employment
While we'd all like to put COVID-19 behind us, some of its impacts on employment are here to stay. The pandemic ushered in changes in employee preferences, especially remote work, and it is likely to impact how laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act operate as well. Learn how COVID-19 may continue to impact how you recruit and retain talent for years to come.
Speakers: Representatives from Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

Updating and Maintaining Your Township's Water and Sewer Infrastructure
This informative session combines the financial expertise of both municipal advisors and bond counsel. We'll begin by demonstrating how utility rate studies can offer insights into your township's water and wastewater improvement costs, and offer tips for rate management and capital spending, including the impact of Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule. A discussion on options for financing lead service line replacement and infrastructure improvements rounds out the session.

Speakers: Steven Mann, Attorney, Miller Canfield; and Andy Campbell, CPA, Director, Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors, LLC

Whose Land Is It Anyway
There are hundreds, if not thousands, of very old platted subdivisions in Michigan. Some contain parks, beaches, walkways and other features originally dedicated to public use. Oftentimes, these dedicated areas have never been developed (or used) or have been appropriated by an adjacent lot owner for exclusive use. Who can use it? How? And can your township exercise jurisdiction? Gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding dedicated lands in plats and position your township to address resident questions and legal proceedings involved with the vacation or revision of dedicated lands in a plat.
Speaker: Ron Redick, Attorney, Mika Meyers PLC

Township Business Solutions Sessions
Noon to 1 p.m.
Make the most of your lunch break as these sessions, presented by MTA Allied Service Providers, provide information about various aspects of products and services available to assist townships.



Utility Infrastructure In Your Township
Explore upcoming infrastructure upgrades to improve delivery of utilities to your township. Representatives will discuss utility reliability, upgrades and investment to energy infrastructure in your communities.
Speakers: Consumers Energy representatives



Road Ends: Who Has Rights to These?
What should officials know about the rights of the public and private landowners in roads that end at a body of water? The presentation will cover both opened roads and unopened platted streets and the role of townships in regulating conflicts between competing interests over usage of the road and access to the water.
Speaker: Richard Wilson, Attorney, Mika Meyers PLC



Glad You Asked That!
Back by popular demand, this interactive presentation lets the audience set the topics and questions answered by experienced township attorneys. Submit questions before the Conference at



www.fsbrlaw.com/mta. All the legal questions will be posted in advance, so you can see what will be addressed. Get the answers you need!

Speakers: Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC, Township Attorneys

Hot Legal Topics Facing Township

Foster Swift attorneys offer a



practical perspective on hot topics facing Michigan, including but not limited to marijuana businesses, wind and solar energy, and zoning and land use. Have a topic you want addressed? Email info@fosterswift.com by April 8, 2022, and at least two most frequently emailed topics will be addressed at this session.

Speakers: Foster Swift attorneys

What ... I'm HR?!

Even the smallest townships with minimal staffing need to be on top of their HR compliance. Explore the benefits of the Par Plan's complimentary HR risk management service and how it can assist with your HR questions, compliance and training needs.



Speakers: Michigan Township Participating Plan representatives

Concurrent Educational Sessions

1:30 to 2:45 p.m.

Community Connection LIVE

Don't miss this peer-to-peer discussion of challenges and opportunities facing full-service townships. Bring your own questions (or ideas!) to share with the panel.

Moderator: Neil Sheridan, MTA Executive Director; panelists to be announced

Connecting with the Media

Local media can help you connect with your community and open the lines of communication with residents and stakeholders. Gain insights into creating and maintaining these relationships. Learn what to share, when and why it's important.

Speaker: Terri Stiles, Station Manager, Oxford Community Television

Elections Update

Explore key topics for the 2022 election cycle, legislative changes, election security and much more. Gain insights into common questions asked of the bureau, including an update on the Qualified Voter File and helpful tips for navigating the software.

Speakers: Representatives from Bureau of Elections, Michigan Department of State

Ethics & Leadership

As a leader in your community, you recognize the importance of building (and maintaining!) trust, transparency and integrity. Preserving that hard-earned credibility is both a conscious decision and a constant battle. Learn how to recognize ethical risks, policies and procedures for addressing unethical behavior and tips for enhancing your own ethical decision-making.

Speaker: David Harvey, Director of Operations for Shield Leadership Institute, Adjunct Professor, Madonna University

Increasing Safety Through Situational Awareness

In today's era of new and emerging threats, we must be more aware of our surroundings than ever. Situational awareness is only as accurate as our own mindset and reading of the situation. This eye-opening safety session addresses environmental concerns encountered by your township's field work (walking on and through personal property) and community events like farmer's markets and festivals.

Speakers: Terry Bykerk, Mike Wierenga and Ryan Ricketson, Two The Rescue

Is THIS as Fast as It Gets?

High-speed internet was a necessity even before COVID-19 underscored the broadband gap in Michigan. Is your township struggling with good internet service? You won't want to miss this update on options and initiatives being launched across the state to help bridge the digital divide.

Panelists: Ben Fineman, President, Michigan Broadband Alliance; Eric Frederick, Vice President for Community Affairs, Connected Nation Michigan; and Mike Watza, Principal, Kitch Drutchas Wagner Valitutti & Sherbrook

Listeners Make Better Leaders

People don't care what you know until they know that you care. When you listen effectively, you get a better sense for others' point of view, and they feel heard. It's powerful because it builds connection and strengthens the relationship, whether you agree or not. Group listening techniques can even reduce tension and conflict, getting you one step closer to compromise. Want to learn more? Don't miss this session.

Speaker: Nancy Ohle, President, Organizational Development

Personal Property Tax: Exemptions & Collections

Bulletins issued by the State Tax Commission are not just for your township assessor! Your board needs to update and modify annual township resolutions, including the asset level test and poverty level guidelines. This session will help you prepare for the Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements review with appropriate policies for personal property tax review and exemption, as well as applications that keep your township in compliance.

Speaker: Roxanne Seeber, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber and Kaufman, PC

Planning and Zoning for Renewable Energy

Nearly every township will be approached about a solar or wind installation within the next five years. Is your township prepared? We can help! This session offers perspective and strategies on how your township can plan for renewable energy. Learn more about renewable energy data sources and explore how the scale of wind and solar technology can support or detract from your township's priorities. Successful examples from Michigan and around the country will be highlighted.

Speakers: Sarah Mills, PhD, University of Michigan, Graham Sustainability Institute; and Harmony Fierke-Gmazel, AICP, and Mary Reilly, AICP, Michigan State University Extension

Wait, Where Does It Say That? Laws, Rules & Online Resources

The old wall of law books has been replaced by the world of free online resources to help townships understand the laws, rules and other requirements for township operations. This informative session will tour a variety of state, federal and other helpful websites and online tools. MTA staff use them every day in answering your questions—you can, too!

Speaker: Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Staff Attorney

What Is Hemp & How Does It Impact My Township?

Hemp fibers and stalks are used for a variety of purposes, and interest in cannabinoids besides THC continues to expand. The state Department of Agriculture and Rural Development licenses growers and processors, tracks cultivation information, and conducts sampling and testing. Learn more about

state's hemp program and gain insights into the possibilities for Michigan farmers. *Speakers:* Molly Mott, Industrial Hemp Program Specialist, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; and Theresa Sisung, Industry Relations Specialist, Michigan Farm Bureau

What Changes Are Proposed for the MTA Policy Platform

Learn about the proposed 2022 Policy Platform from a panel of MTA directors who serve on the MTA Legislative Policy Platform Committee. Panelists will discuss proposed changes to the policy platform and receive comments from attendees. This session allows delegates to learn the rationale behind the proposed changes and have their questions addressed prior to the Annual Meeting, where the proposed policy platform will be formally introduced. *Speakers:* Members of the MTA Board of Directors and MTA Government Relations Staff

Concurrent Educational Sessions 3:15 to 4:30 p.m.

Community Reaction to Land Use Changes

Land use changes may be viewed by residents with suspicion, fear, questions—and even anger. People are creatures of habit, and change is the process of becoming different. Explore the cycle of change and learn techniques to manage unfavorable reactions. Identify strategies on the best way to introduce land use changes in your community. *Speaker:* Steve Langworthy, retired planner, and author of MTA planning & zoning guidebooks

Overcoming Implicit Bias

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. Whether favorably or unfavorably, it's activated involuntarily—without your awareness or control. These biases develop over the course of a lifetime from an early age and through media and news programming. Becoming aware of it and being motivated to change are necessary first steps! Join the discussion and learn strategies to reduce implicit bias. *Speaker:* Gloria Lara, Executive Director, Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance

Recruitment & Retention During the "Great Resignation"

Employees across the state are "jumping ship" in record numbers, and expectations abound about the type of job and work environment people expect. Attracting and retaining qualified members of your township team require far more than just a job posting. These days, that goes beyond pay and benefits and includes anticipating—and accommodating—generational differences. Learn strategies for making your township workplace more attractive to draw the talent you need to succeed. *Speaker:* David Harvey, Director, Public Safety Leadership Institute, Madonna University

The Impact of Redistricting on Elections

By April, the dust surrounding the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission's legislative and congressional maps will have settled and clerks will be immersed in elections preparations. You won't want to miss this review of the impact the new maps have on your township's precincts, voter registration cards, street index and more! *Speakers:* Representatives from the Bureau of Elections, Michigan Department of State

Taking Care of Your Township Team

First responders are often exposed to stressful events and adrenaline that will affect their personal lives. Learn how to recognize and address the unique stressors to which first responders are exposed. Take away tips on how your township can create peer support teams, employee assistance and overall wellness programs that support the physical and mental health of those whose duty to serve conflicts with their own safety. *Speakers:* Terry Bykerk, Mike Wierenga and Ryan Ricketson, Two The Rescue

Tax Collecting Paper Trail

It's less about the words you speak, and all about the documents that you keep. Don't get caught without good tax collecting documentation. Learn tips and tricks for using your software and other electronic means to track tax documents. Take away strategies for creating checklists, using forms and other options for creating effective tax collecting documentation. *Speaker:* Cindy Dodge, MTA Member Information Services Liaison

We're All in This Together

If you've lost sleep over a particularly difficult meeting, you are likely not alone. Though differences can be pronounced, even between board members, we are all on the same team. Get practical tips on reaching agreement, how to conduct yourself during difficult conversations and respond to challenging people (including other elected officials). After all, most people want to help, have input and be a part of the solution. Walk away with practical strategies for making your meetings and interactions better, more effective and more satisfying. *Speaker:* Cindy Lakin Morley, Morley Management Services, LLC

What to Do with a Marijuana Initiative Referendum

Your township has made a local decision to prohibit or restrict adult-use/recreational marijuana businesses—but now you've received a petition to place a referendum on the ballot at the next election, with a proposal to allow marijuana businesses or impose fewer restrictions. What happens next? What if the ballot measure passes? And what can the township say about the ballot measure without violating the Campaign Finance Act? Explore this new legal territory and these difficult (but important!) questions. *Speaker:* Laura Genovich, Shareholder, Foster Swift

What Your Township Needs to Know about Franchises

What is a franchise? Does it require an ordinance, or can we just vote on it? What's the process for renewal? A franchise agreement is a contract between your township and a public utility provider (from electric to cable, gas and oil pipelines, yes, even the METRO Act). Your township gives consent to public utilities so they can install infrastructure in a public right-of-way. Franchise agreements are put in place to allow them to utilize that infrastructure and conduct their business in that space. Learn more about these agreements, including fees and what considerations are negotiable. *Speaker:* Rob Thall, MTA Legal Counsel, Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber and Kaufman, PC