

**EXPLORE THE GRAND REGION:  
A COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN  
IN NORTHWEST OTTAWA COUNTY**

**2015-2019**

**ENCOMPASSING THE COMMUNITIES OF**

**CITY OF FERRYSBURG  
CITY OF GRAND HAVEN  
GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
SPRING LAKE TOWNSHIP  
VILLAGE OF SPRING LAKE**



# **Explore the Grand Region: A Community Parks and Recreation Plan in Northwest Ottawa County**

**2015-2019**

## **Participating Communities**

**City of Ferrysburg  
City of Grand Haven  
Grand Haven Charter Township  
Spring Lake Township  
Village of Spring Lake**

### **Ferrysburg City Council**

Dan Ruiter, Mayor  
Michael DeWitt  
Chris Larson  
Rebecca Hopp  
Scott Blease  
Regina Sjoberg  
Kathleen Kennedy

### **Grand Haven Charter Township Board**

Karl French, Supervisor  
Laurie Larsen, Clerk  
William Kieft, III, Treasurer  
Ron Redick  
Mike Hutchins  
Cal Meeusen  
Howard Behm

### **Grand Haven City Council**

Geri McCaleb, Mayor  
Michael Fritz, Mayor Pro-tem  
John Hierholzer  
Robert Monetza  
Dennis Scott

### **Spring Lake Township Board**

John Nash, Supervisor  
H. Carolyn Boersma, Clerk  
Jim Koster, Treasurer  
Ron Lindquist  
Rick Homan  
Rachel Terpstra  
Lawrence Mierle

### **Village of Spring Lake Council**

Jim MacLachlan, President  
David Bennett, President Pro-Tem  
Bill Meyers  
Mark Miller  
Mark Powers  
Scott VanStrate  
Steve Nauta

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## Introduction

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There are many potential benefits to coordinated recreational planning amongst governmental agencies including increased efficiencies in providing park and recreation opportunities, access to increased funding sources, greater protection and identification of natural resources, greater potential for identifying creative ways of accomplishing recreation goals, public media coverage, expanded public support, economic advantages, and shared long term vision and goals. In striving to begin to plan and understand the local community recreational opportunities available, as well as the planning efforts underway, five communities have joined together within this plan to develop a joint five year community recreation plan. These communities include the City of Ferrysburg, City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Charter Township, Spring Lake Township and the Village of Spring Lake. This is the first joint recreational planning effort of these five communities as a unified plan.

To facilitate the planning process, the five communities established a Joint Recreation Plan Development Committee in which each community could assign one or two representative individuals. The Committee was chaired by Spring Lake Township who hosted the meetings and oversaw the development of the planning document. The five communities determined that the best way to complete a joint recreation plan was to retain a recreation consultant to assist in the plan development. The five communities jointly retained the firm of PM Blough, Inc. to assist in the development of the recreation inventory, public input, the planning process, and the writing of the plan document. The Committee met periodically throughout the process to guide the planning effort and the Committee members served as liaisons between the Committee and their respective communities.

A comprehensive inventory was completed of the recreational facilities within the five governmental jurisdictions. The results of this inventory are included in the Recreation Inventory section of this document and are broken into resources by each governmental unit as well as summarized as a whole community. Of significant relevance was the creation of an overall regional mapping of public park sites onto one map and the creation of a unified park facilities inventory chart, both of which had previously not existed and will also be used as community information resources. Individual park sheets were also created for each park in a unified manner which can also be used for additional uses beyond the plan such as local websites and informational handouts.

The five communities have voluntarily decided to incorporate all five communities into one area-wide recreation plan in order to better plan and provide recreation facilities on a community-

wide basis. The communities are not bound by an authority, but rather are jointly approving this plan individually. When adopted, this plan will replace the existing Five Year Community Recreation Plans in each of the five communities.

The document is based on the format provided by the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources for community recreation planning. It contains plan sections that include the Community Description, Administrative Structure, Recreation Inventory, Goals and Objectives, and Action Plan, and Planning Process. It is the intent of this document to provide a foundation for recreational planning and development within the Community.

## Community Description

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### Jurisdiction of the Plan

This plan provides a cooperatively developed plan for the communities of the City of Ferrysburg, City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Charter Township, Spring Lake Township, and the Village of Spring Lake, all located within northwest Ottawa County. These communities all share a common link to the Grand River, and a focus on its connecting waters of Spring Lake, adjacent bayous, and Lake Michigan. Together, these communities comprise approximately 57 square miles and a consolidated population of roughly 42,752 persons based on the 2010 US Census.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Total Square Miles in Size</u>
City of Ferrysburg	3.6 Square Miles
City of Grand Haven	7.4 Square Miles
Grand Haven Charter Township	28.6 Square Miles
Spring Lake Township	16.5 Square Miles
<u>Village of Spring Lake</u>	<u>1.1 Square Miles</u>
Total Area:	57.2 Square Miles

Historically the community developed as three separate cities, Grand Haven, Spring Lake, and Ferrysburg with each of these communities located independently on different sides of the Grand River and Spring Lake. As development and modern construction developed, the communities were connected with bridges making access between them quick and easy. Over time, the communities have grown together as well as outward into the neighboring townships of Spring Lake Township and Grand Haven Charter Township. Many of the recreational activities, festivals, and programs are offered as community wide opportunities. Recently this cooperative atmosphere has continued to grow and thrive. As a result, these communities determined it would be best to expand this to planning for the future vision collectively for the northwest Ottawa County region, being referred to here as the Grand Region.

This Recreation Plan has been developed to provide for cooperative planning regarding recreational facility needs and development.

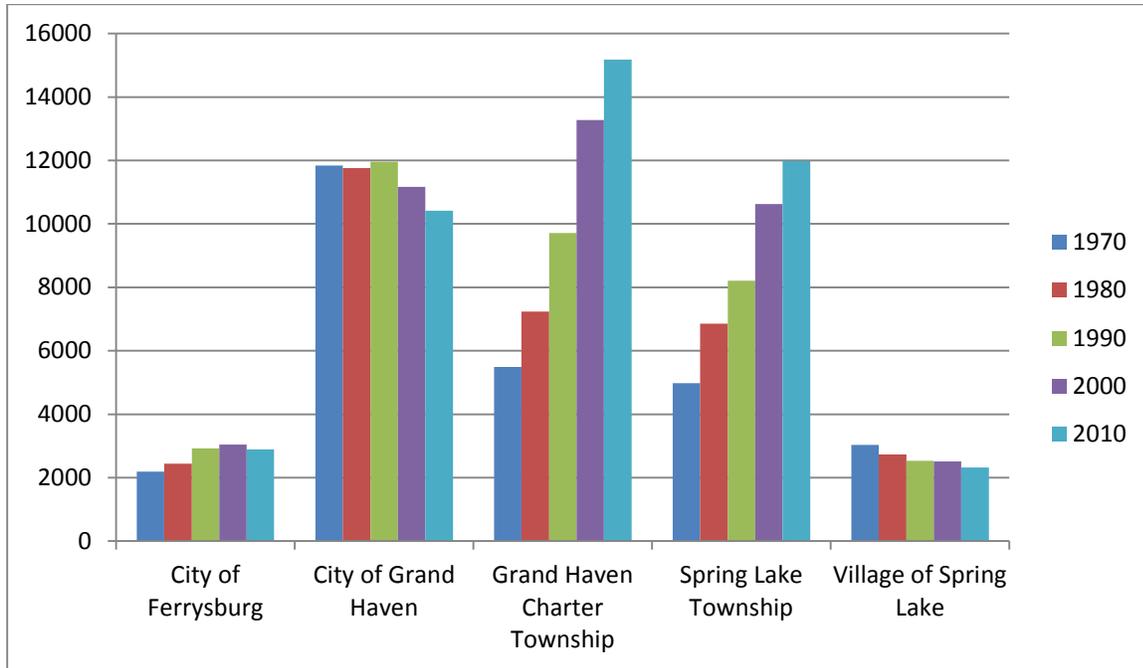
### Community Population

Northwest Ottawa County overall continues to show growth with the greatest growth within Grand Haven Charter Township and Spring Lake Township with slight declines in the City of Ferrysburg, City of Grand Haven, and the Village of Spring Lake. Based on the 2010 US Census data, the combined population of the five communities is:

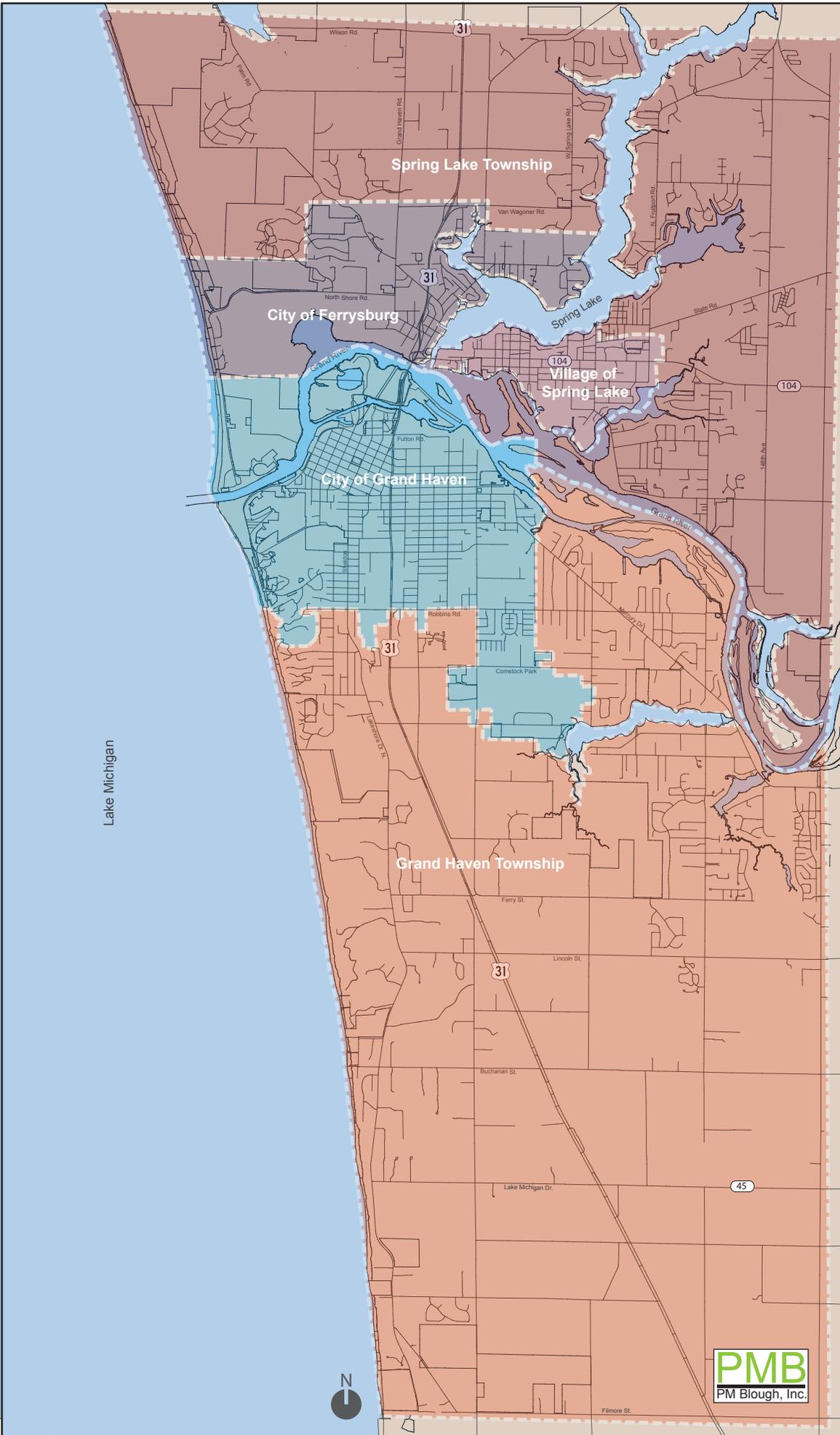
<u>Community</u>	<u>Number of Persons</u>
City of Ferrysburg	2,892 persons
City of Grand Haven	10,412 persons

Grand Haven Charter Township	15,178 persons
Spring Lake Township	11,977 persons
<u>Village of Spring Lake</u>	<u>2,323 persons</u>
Total for 2010 US Census	42,782 persons

**Comparison of Total Population by Community 1970-2010**



# Grand Region Plan Jurisdiction Area



- City of Ferrysburg
- City of Grand Haven
- Grand Haven Township
- Spring Lake Township
- Village of Spring Lake



## ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

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The Administrative Structure section of the plan provides a description of the administrative framework within each community for providing parks and recreation services. All of the governmental units within this plan operate as independent administrative units who often chose to work together cooperatively for the betterment of the community. As each unit is separate, each participating community's Administrative Structure is described independently within the plan section.

# City of Ferrysburg Administrative Structure

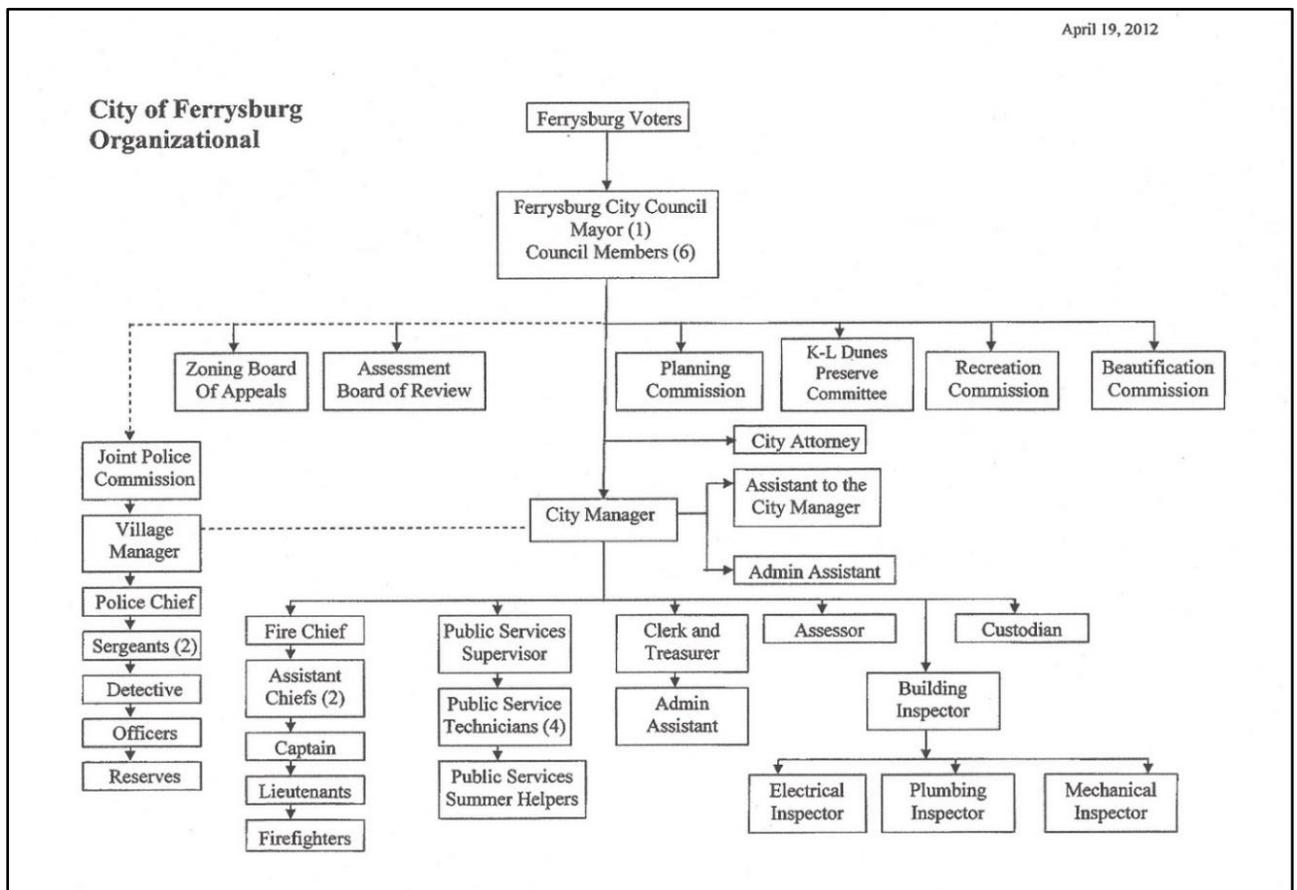
## Administrative Structure

The City of Ferrysburg is administered by a seven member City Council lead by the Mayor. The Mayor's term is for two years and City Council Member terms are for four years. Regarding parks and recreation, the City Council approves the yearly budget, acquisition of lands, oversight of capital development projects, approval of City acceptance of grants, and establishment of park policy's and ordinances.

## City Staff and Administration

The daily operation of the City and oversight of the City staff is the responsibility of the City Manager who is appointed by the City Council. The City parks are administered by the Public Services Department with four full-time and two seasonal employees who are assigned to parks and recreation facility maintenance.

## Organization Chart



### **Recreation Commission**

The Ferrysburg City Council established, by ordinance, a seven member Recreation Commission that advise the City Council regarding parks and recreation matters. The Recreation Commission meets as needed to provide guidance to the planning, development, and operation of the parks within the City. The Michigan Enabling Legislation for the establishment of a Recreation Commission is 1929 PA312 Metropolitan District Act which provides for Charter Commissions.

### **Funding for Parks**

Funding for the development and maintenance of the parks is provided by the City's General Fund which has a 2014-2015 parks budget of \$138,300, broken into with a budget for park operation and maintenance of \$136,500, and a capital development budget of \$1,800. The General Fund includes an additional budget item of \$8,500 for programming as a contribution to the Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority.

### **Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority (NORA)**

The City of Ferrysburg is a member of the Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority (NORA), an authority that provides recreational programming for the member communities included within the Grand Haven Area Public Schools boundaries including the City of Ferrysburg, City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Township, and Robinson Township, and Port Sheldon Township. The Grand Haven Area Public Schools is also a supporting entity through the use of school facilities and oversight of the NORA staff and funds. Funding for the Authority is provided by member communities, revenues generated from the programs, and various grants and sponsorships. Member agencies also provide park athletic facilities for use by the NORA programs, as well as other local non-profits

### **Local Non-profits & Volunteers**

Local Non-profit organizations providing recreational programming are included in the Recreation Inventory Section of the Plan as they encompass the entire community.

## **City of Grand Haven Administrative Structure**

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### **Administrative Structure and City Council**

The City of Grand Haven, by charter, operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The Grand Haven City Council is comprised of a Mayor and four Council members elected at large who serve two and four year terms respectively. The City Council appoints a Chief Administrative Officer (City Manager) whose responsibility is to carry out priorities and goals of the City Council including the fiscal budgeting for parks operation and maintenance, park capital development, land acquisition, grant acceptance and recreation within the community. Park rules and policies are set by the City Council as part of the City Ordinances with recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Board.

### **Parks and Recreation Board**

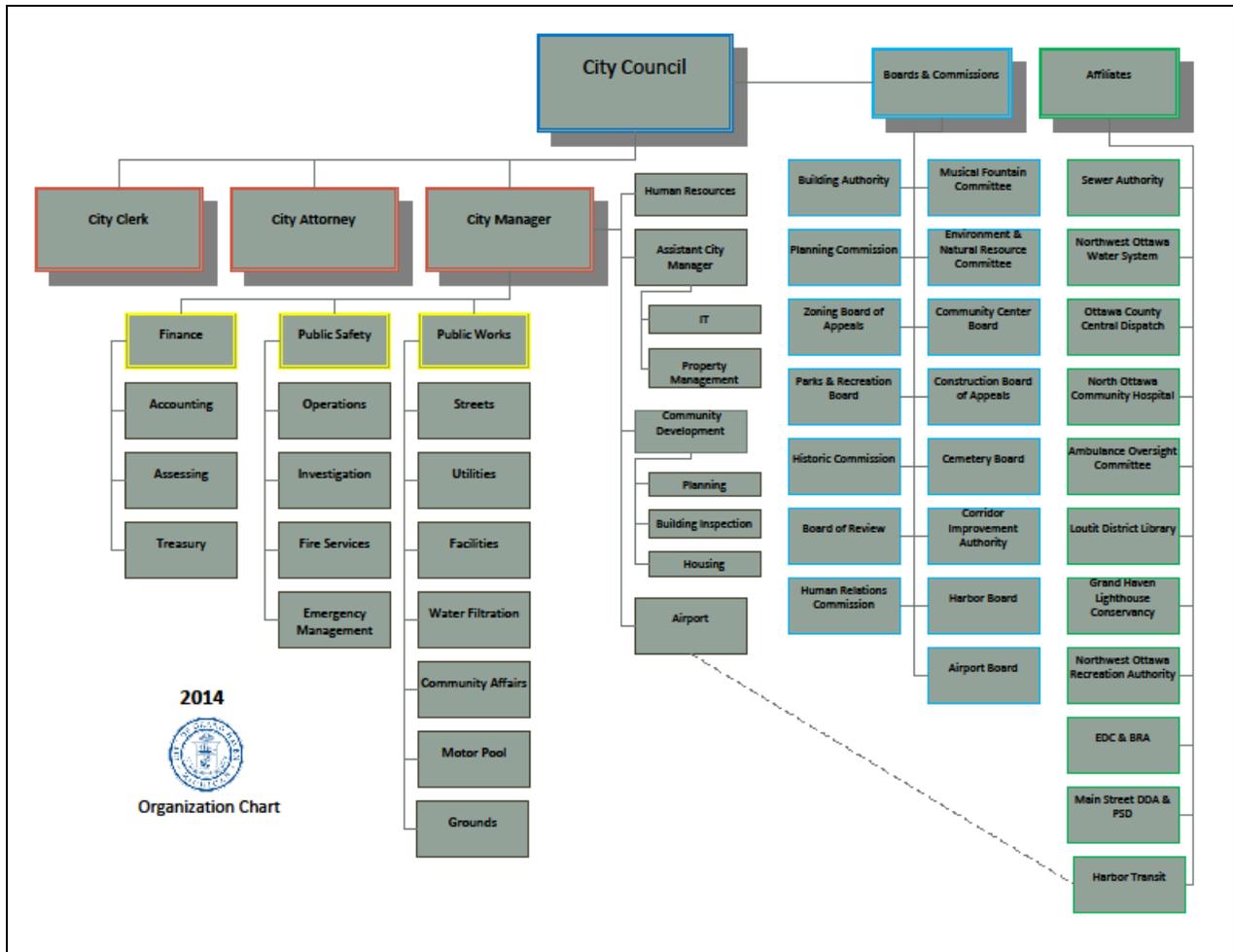
The City Charter "affords citizen participation in the affairs of the city government for the purpose of determining community needs and means of meeting such needs through the government of the city." (City charter Section. 7.14) The Parks and Recreation Board is one of the boards listed in the Charter and is comprised of five Grand Haven citizen volunteers who are appointed by the City Council for a term of five years. The establishment of the Parks and Recreation board is allowed through the Michigan enabling legislation 1917 PA 156 Recreation and Playgrounds. The Parks and Recreation Board meets monthly to provide guidance regarding the planning, development, and operation of the City's parks by making recommendations to the City Council for final approval.

### **City Staff**

The parks are maintained and operated by the Grounds Service Area and the Maintenance Service Area of the Department of Public Works with nine full time employees and up to thirty-five summer seasonal employees dedicated to the parks, as well as one SWAP crew. These employees assist with community volunteers and maintain the parks infrastructure year round. The Public Works Director assigns the Special Projects Manager as the staff liaison to the Parks and Recreation Board.

### **Organization Chart**

An organization chart depicting the functions and lines of authority is shown on the following page.



### Funding for Parks and Recreation

Funding for the development and maintenance of the parks is provided by the City's General Fund, with a 2015 budget for park operation and maintenance of \$721,435, and a capital development budget of \$183,500. The General Fund includes a budget of \$33,034 for programming as a contribution to the Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority.

### Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority (NORA)

The City of Grand Haven is a member of the Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority (NORA), an authority that provides recreational programming for the member communities within the Grand Haven Area Public Schools boundaries including the City of Ferrysburg, City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Township, and Robinson Township, and Port Sheldon Township. The Grand Haven Area Public Schools is also a supporting entity through the use of school facilities and oversight of the NORA staff and funds. Funding for the Authority is provided by member communities, revenues generated from the programs, and various grants and sponsorships. Member agencies also provide park athletic facilities for use by the NORA programs, as well as other local non-profits

**Local Non-profits & Volunteers**

Local Non-profit organizations providing recreational programming are included in the Recreation Inventory Section of the Plan as they encompass the entire community.

# **Grand Haven Charter Township Administrative Structure**

## **Township Board**

The Grand Haven Charter Township Board is the main legislative body of the Township. It is comprised of a supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and four trustees elected at large. Each of the officials is elected to serve four-year terms. The role of the Board is to develop legislative policies which include the adoption of all planning documents and the establishment of the yearly fiscal budget. In regards to Parks and Recreation, the Township Board approves all park planning documents, policies and financial budgets as well as capital development. One member of the Township Board serves on the Parks and Recreation Committee.

## **Township Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission is comprised of nine members who are appointed by the Township Board. One member is a member of the Township Board, and a second member is a Zoning Board of Appeals member. The Planning Commission reviews and makes formal recommendations to the Township Board regarding site plan development, planning policies, ordinances, and master plans. One member of the Planning Commission serves on the Parks and Recreation Committee to provide insight to the committee and provide a liaison to the Commission regarding recreational planning and interface of park properties with surrounding land uses. The Planning Commission will review the Five Year Community Recreation Plan prior to approval by the Township Board.

## **Parks and Recreation Committee**

The Parks and Recreation Committee members are appointed by the Township Board. The committee was formed in 1988 to involve the community in the development of Mercury Park. Since that time, the Committee has continued to assist in the overall direction and development of the entire park system. The Committee acts in an advisory role to the Township Board and includes one Township Board member.

## **Township Staff and Organization**

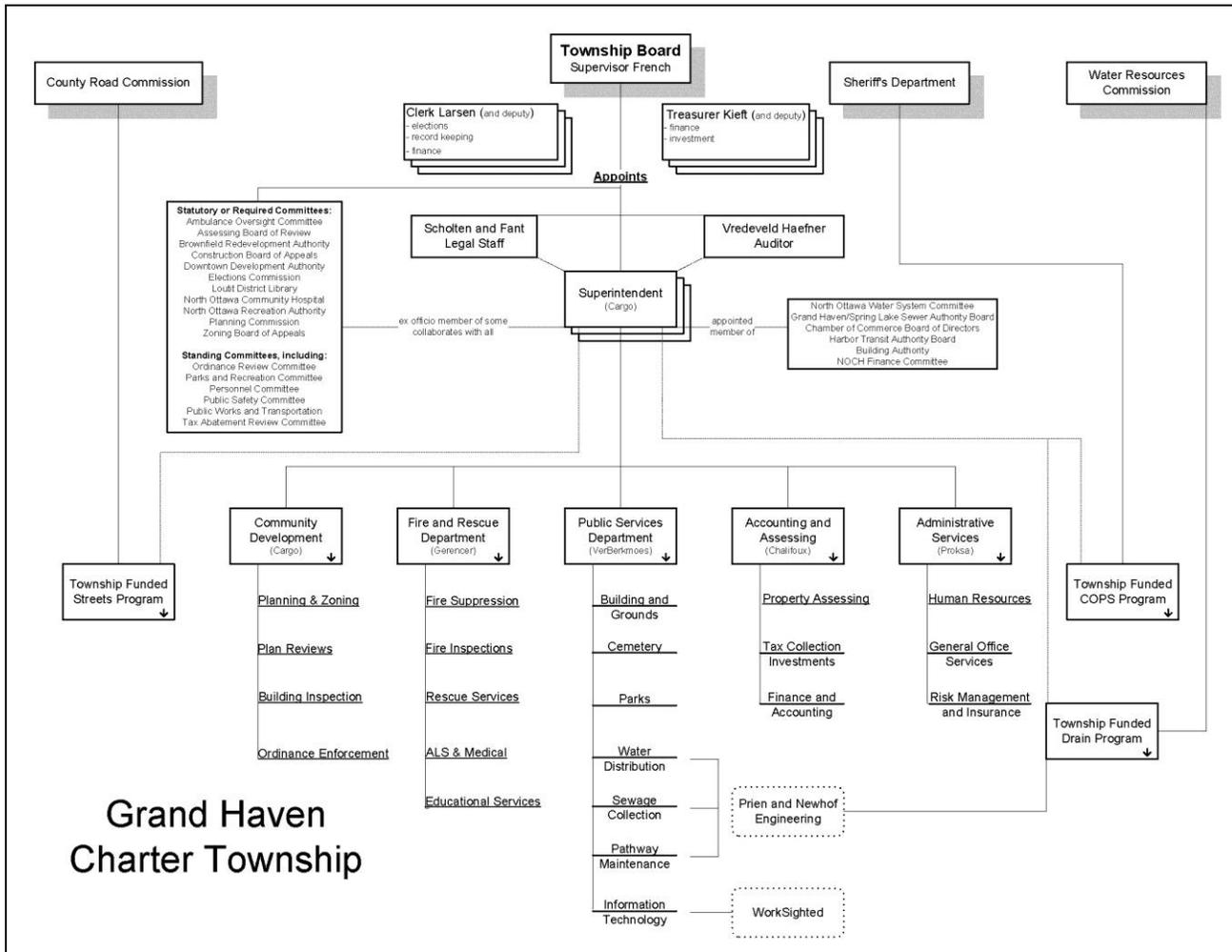
Administration of the Township's operations is the responsibility of the Township Superintendent. The Superintendent is contracted as an employee by the Township Board. The Superintendent implements the board's legislative policies through the day to day operations. The Township has forty-seven staff persons involved in the day to day operations including the Township public services, parks, finances, building and zoning, as well as public safety.

The care of the parks is by one full-time employee assigned to the maintenance of the parks who is assisted by four part-time employees. The Public Services Department provides additional assistance for year round maintenance such as mowing, repairs to facilities, and cleaning. They are also responsible for overseeing the development of capital improvement projects. The Public Services Director also serves as a staff person to the Park and Recreation Committee. The Ottawa County Sheriff and the Township Fire and Rescue Department provide security for the parks. The

non-motorized pathway system, considered separate from the parks system has one full-time staff person assigned to the care and maintenance of the pathways.

### Township Organization Chart

An organization chart depicting the functions and lines of authority is shown below.



### Parks and Recreation Funding

The total budgeted General Fund expenditures for Grand Haven Charter Township for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 is \$3,328,280. Additional funds are budgeted for the Fire Fund, Sewer Construction Fund, Non-Motorized Path Fund, and the Water Service Fund.

Funding for the care and development of the parks is within the General Fund. In the 2014 Fiscal Year, the projected annual expenditures for parks are \$336,350. Expenses against these funds are projected at \$140,700 for two Township employees and administration, \$50,870 as

the Township's contribution to the Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority Program, \$29,560 for general maintenance and projects, and \$55,900 in capital improvements.

The development phase of the Township's Non-Motorized Pathway System was funded by an initial ten-year 0.90 mil levy, which was approved by the voters in 1990. The second phase was approved by Township voters in 1998, when the Township proposed a \$1,732,000 general obligation unlimited tax bond. The second debt rate expired in 2008. Construction was completed based on the initial bond sales. For Fiscal Year 2013, \$79,920 was budgeted for continued maintenance of the existing system. On-going maintenance is currently funded through the Township's General fund.

### **Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority (NORA)**

The Grand Haven Charter Township is a member of the Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority (NORA), an authority that provides recreational programming for the member communities included within the Grand Haven Area Public Schools boundaries including the City of Ferrysburg, City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Township, and Robinson Township, and Port Sheldon Township. The Grand Haven Area Public Schools is also a supporting entity through the use of school facilities and oversight of the NORA staff and funds. Funding for the Authority is provided by member communities, revenues generated from the programs, and various grants and sponsorships. Member agencies also provide park athletic facilities for use by the NORA programs, as well as other local non-profits

### **Local Non-profits & Volunteers**

Local Non-profit organizations providing recreational programming are included in the Recreation Inventory Section of the Plan as they encompass the entire community.

## **Spring Lake Township Administrative Structure**

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### **Township Board and Administrative Structure**

Spring Lake Township is a General Law Township incorporated in 1849 that is led by a seven member elected Board of Trustees comprised of a supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and four trustees elected at large. Each of the officials is elected to four year terms. The role of the Board is to develop legislative polices which include the adoption of all planning documents and the establishment of the yearly fiscal budget. The Board employs a Township Manager that serves as liaison between the Township staff and Board. In regards to Parks and Recreation, the Township Board approves all park planning documents, policies and financial budgets as well as capital development.

### **Parks and Recreation Committee**

The Parks and Recreation Committee is comprised of seven volunteer members of the community appointed by the Township Board who serve in an advisory role. The Committee is assisted by the Township Community Development Director and Parks Department. The Parks and Recreation Committee provides input to the Township Board and staff regarding planning and development for the parks and community policies.

### **Township Staff for Park Operation**

The care and operation of the parks are under the care of the Department of Public Works which includes full-time Grounds Maintenance staff as well as seasonal assistance which are dedicated to the care of the parks.

### **Organization Chart**

An organization chart of the Township staff appears on the following page.

# Organization Chart

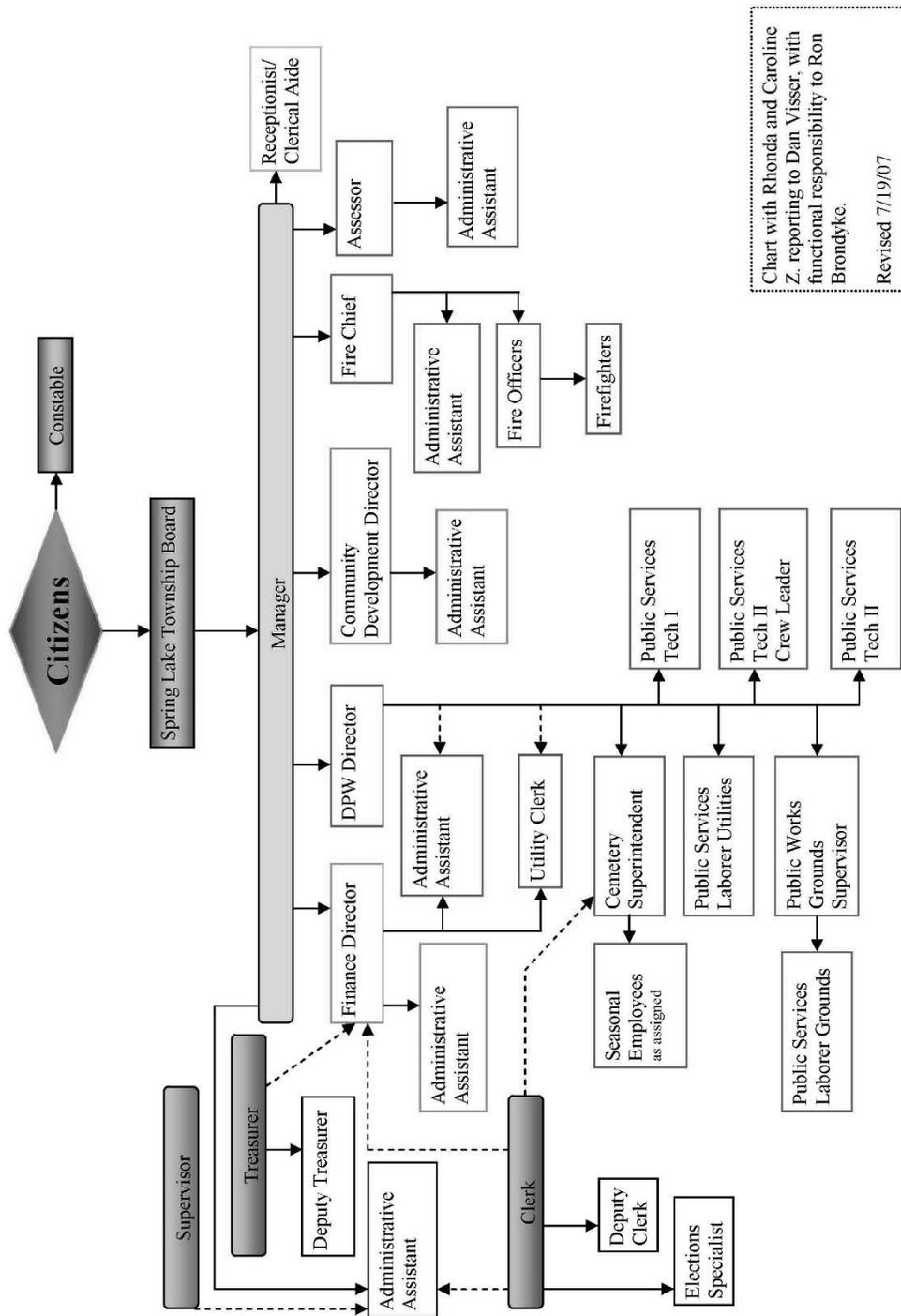


Chart with Rhonda and Caroline Z. reporting to Dan Visser, with functional responsibility to Ron Brondykc.  
Revised 7/19/07

### **General Fund Recreation Budget**

The Spring Lake Township Recreation budget is funded through the General Fund of the Township. Proposed budgets for the fiscal year 2014-2015 for the Township General Fund include \$202,600 for Parks and Recreation of which \$32,500 is contributed towards recreational programming. No other capital development projects are planned through the General Fund although maintenance projects are included in the above number. The Township has two full-time parks and recreation staff and three part-time/seasonal staff.

### **Bike Path Millage**

The first bike path millage was passed in the 1980's by the Spring Lake Township residents, followed by a second millage in 2004. These funds have been used to create over 26 miles of bike paths throughout the Township over the last 15 to 20 years. The bike path millage is currently used to pay back bonds at a rate of approximately \$200,000 per year with about \$50,000 a year available for maintenance and improvements.

### **Spring Lake Area Recreation Commission**

The Greater Spring Lake Area Recreation Commission was established in cooperation with the contributing entities listed below. When established the entities felt it was in the best interest of their citizens to establish the commission to plan, promote, coordinate, and operate programs of indoor and outdoor public recreation. Over the many years the Commission has been able to offer these programs at low cost to the citizens. The Commission offers a variety of programs, including many sports camps, swim lessons, computer classes, theater programs as well as new and varied programs. This fund also provides funding for summer employees at Rycenga Park to ensure compliance with park rules and assist with organizing shelter rentals. Funding is provided by contributions from Crockery Township, Spring Lake Public Schools, and Spring Lake Township, as well as user fees, and donations.

## **Village of Spring Lake Administrative Structure**

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### **Administrative Structure and Village Council**

The Village of Spring Lake is a duly incorporated municipal subdivision of the State of Michigan with operations of the Village controlled by State enabling legislation and the Village Charter. The Village Council is comprised of six councilmembers elected at-large to four year terms, and a Village President who serves a two year term. The Village Council oversees the development of the City budget, including that of the parks for operation and maintenance, capital development, acquisition, acceptance of grants, and programming. The Village Council retains the Village Manager to oversee the day to day operation of the Village.

### **Village Park Committee**

The Village Park Committee was instituted by Village Council resolution on January 16, 1979 to assist the Village Manager with the Planning, development, and operation of park and recreation facilities and programs. The Committee is comprised of seven members appointed by the Village Council to 4 to year terms. The Committee serves in an advisory manner to the Village Manager and Village Council.

### **Village Staff**

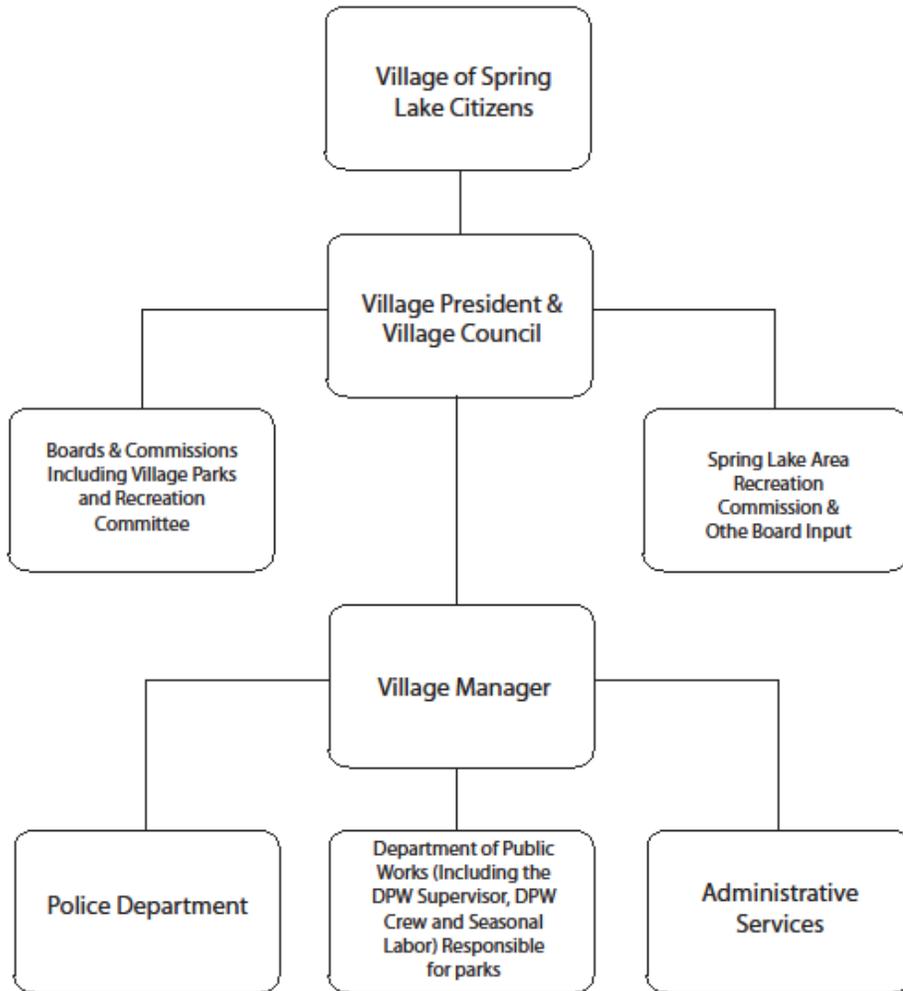
The Village Manager directs the Department of Public Works with overseeing the care and operation of the parks that provides these services with four full time and one part time employees. Security within the parks is provided by the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department

### **Organization Chart**

An organization chart appears on the following page which provides information regarding administrative roles and responsibilities within the Village.

Administrative Organizational Chart  
Village of Spring Lake

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In the event project activities including planning, design, construction and/or outside source funding assistance, recommendations and basic advisory support will be provided by the Parks Committee. Similarly, the Parks Board will inform and advise the Manager and Council on matters of direct operation and maintenance of park facilities and programs.

**Funding**

Funding for parks is provided through the General Fund which has a 2014-2015 budget of \$1,415,404 of which \$ 272,759 is budgeted for parks maintenance and operation, and \$0 for capital development, and \$0 for recreation programming. The Village does not have a separate budget line item for capital development. All park improvements therefore fall under maintenance for each respective park.

**Relationship with Spring Lake Recreation Authority**

On July 31, 2014 Council elected to discontinue funding of SLARA. As residents of Spring Lake Township, the elected officials felt that funding from Spring Lake Township General Fund covered the entire township (to include the Village.)

**Local Non-profits & Volunteers**

Local Non-profit organizations providing recreational programming are included in the Recreation Inventory Section of the Plan as they encompass the entire community.