

To the Taxpayers of Bruce Township,

The Trustees of Bruce Township have had many discussions concerning General Assistance Funds. These funds have accumulated over a fifteen year period. Twenty years ago when Mr. Henry Araujo became supervisor, the General Assistance was underfunded and had a short fall of \$70,000. The Township Fund deposited \$70,000 in General Assistance and the following year, an additional \$20,000 was needed to cover General Assistance expenses.

In a previous article from the Times, it stated the Trustees voted to transfer the amount of \$120,000 from the Township Fund to the General Assistance Fund. That is INCORRECT. The money was transferred back to General Assistance from the Township Fund at the Annual Township Meeting in April 2017. This was voted on not by the Trustees and/or Supervisor but by all the registered voters of Bruce Township that attended the meeting.

The General Assistance program clientele must meet certain requirements. An applicant is ineligible for General Assistance if the applicant is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). They may not have a job, can be married or single but must not have children under the age of 18 living in the applicant's household. A person receiving Social Security (SS) or Social Security Disability (SSD) may be eligible. The Township office receives numerous phone calls weekly concerning the assistance. Many applicants choose not to fill out the paper work, bring proof of income, and eviction or disconnection notices. We would like to bring back a program which is called Emergency Assistance. The clientele requirements will be different. With the Emergency Assistance program you may be single or married, have a job and also have dependents in your household under the age of 18. It was first discussed to have a maximum total household income of \$50,000, but that was not set in stone. After further discussion, the possibility of following the Federal Poverty Level maybe our guideline. We will still discuss and learn more about this option at the conference we are attending in November. We would like to help as many residents of Bruce Township that are experiencing financial difficulties. On a taxpayer's bill, 4.94% is for Bruce Township & Township Road. Only a small percentage of the Township's share goes to the General Assistance. We cannot completely deplete the Fund as some have suggested by in the form of a refund. Vouchers for the clients on assistance, office supplies and partial salaries, and catastrophic insurance with Township being liability for the first \$25,000 need to be kept in reserve.

In their opinion, Mr. Steve Biroshchik and Mr. David Giuliani along with his articles recommend that money be refunded but without having a clear formula to do so. The estimated cost of postage, checks, and paper products would exceed \$10,000 for this option. Labor cost is not included in this expense. The number of parcels currently eligible for the refund is slightly over 6500. How would you decide who gets the refund, the current owner or should it be EVERY owner that owned that property over the last 10 years? That could possibly be several checks to be issued for a single property. In addition, other factors to consider would be changes in assessments and exemptions.

As Trustees of Bruce Township, in our opinion we feel the fairest way to lower our General Assistance Fund is to initiate the Emergency Assistance Fund and not levy for the General Assistance Fund until it is substantially reduced. This should lower the tax rate for Bruce Township.

Respectfully submitted,

Harold "Randy" Baumrucker  
Gerald "Jerry" Christensen

Robert "Bob" Harrison  
Scott Orban