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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Forsyth Township

Township Manager



Forsyth Township

The township of Forsyth seeks a strategic and innovative person with a passion for local government to become its first township manager. The ideal candidate will want to live and work in an outdoor paradise in the heart of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Natural beauty and a small-town atmosphere allow a laid-back lifestyle, with access to a full array of year-round recreational and cultural opportunities.

Forsyth Township is an engaged community proud of its rich heritage. Its 6,194 residents value the small-town atmosphere and significant amenities.

The township is a full-service, progressive community with 24 full-time employees, an overall budget of more than \$8 million, and a taxable value of more than \$246 million. It is in sound financial shape and has a diversified economic base.



FORSYTH TOWNSHIP

The new township manager will be responsible for daily operations, developing and maintaining relationships with elected officials, department heads, and all levels of township employees, and respecting and valuing township residents.

The Township of Forsyth will offer a competitive compensation and benefits package, including health, dental, and vision coverage, a salary range of \$85,000 to \$110,000 (depending on qualifications and experience), and a defined compensation employer contribution of 8 percent with a 6 percent employee contribution and 6-year vesting.



The Organization

Forsyth Township has a 5-member Township Board and a 5-member (with one alternate) Planning Commission. Each meets monthly. The Township Board oversees the parks and recreation operations. Marquette County is responsible for the Little Trout Lake recreation area and the area known as the Marquette County Forest, part of which is located within the township borders.

The township board consists of an elected supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and two trustees. All board members serve four-year terms. The board is responsible for adopting budgets and ordinances and overseeing township programs and services.

In addition to the township board, the township has a zoning board of appeals, board of review, planning commission, blight committee, road committee, water and sewer committee, and short-term rental committee.

The township has a full-service police department with eight officers, a DPW with four employees and one mechanic, sewer lagoons, and four wells serving about 800 customers in the Gwinn area. It also has a transfer/recycling station, numerous township parks, a campground, a shooting range, a community/senior center, and a cemetery. Marquette County operates the water and sewer systems for the 3,000 Sawyer residents living in Forsyth Township.

The township works with two unions: the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM), which represents six police department employees, and the Technical, Professional Office Workers Association (TPOAM), which represents 22 employees of the township DPW and administrative department. The TPOAM contract expires on August 31, 2026, and the POAM contract expires on March 31, 2026.

The township operates two fire stations, one at Sawyer and one at Gwinn. Thirty-five firefighters, six trucks, and a new truck are arriving this summer. The fire department averages between 125 and 140 runs per year.



The township also operates an EMS/ambulance service with 20 volunteers, averaging 850 and 1,000 runs annually. Rampart does the billing for the township.

Assessing services are contracted out to the Marquette County Equalization Department.

Currently, the township is working on updating its master plan and has contracted with Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development (CUPPAD) to provide technical assistance.

The township uses B&SA accounting software.

The township has licensed one marijuana providing operation, and one grow license, with additional licenses available.

The township has several community events, including a Fourth of July celebration and fireworks, Fun Days in late June, one week of an alumni softball tournament, horse racing and rodeo, ice racing, the Big Three concert, and the Gus Macker basketball tournament. It will also host the 130th U.P. Firefighters Tournament this summer.

We love where you live.



The Organization con't

SELECTED FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

- Number of full-time employees – 24
- Number of firefighters (volunteer) – 35
- Number of EMS (volunteer) – 20
- Part-time employees – 10
- Irregular part-time employees – 20
- Seasonal employees – 7
- General fund budget - \$3,588,160
- Total of all budgets - \$8,218,423
- General fund balance (as of 3/31/24) - \$2,571,516
- All funds fund balance (as of 3/31/24) - \$8,956,473
- Total long- and short-term debt (as of 3/31/24) - \$6,138,692
- Fiscal year beginning – April 1
- Overall millage rate – PRE – 30.993, non-PRE – 48.993
- Any unfounded pension obligations - \$2,247,860
- Any other unfounded obligations – 0
- Total unrestricted cash (as of 3/31/24) - \$5,668,448
- Total restricted cash (as of 3/31/24) - \$729,015
- Taxable value (2024) - \$246,235,610
- Operating millage – 6.0593
- Police – 3.5909
- Ambulance - .4965
- Library - .4947
- Clubhouse/senior – 1.7953
- Roads – 1.5944

2020 TOWNSHIP CENSUS INFORMATION:

- Persons 65 years and over – 24.6 percent
- Persons under 18 years – 22.9 percent
- Veteran population – 725
- Households – 2,571
- Persons per household – 2.42
- Owner-occupied housing – 78.1 percent
- Median value of owner-occupied houses - \$150,700
- High school graduate – 96.3 percent
- Bachelor's degree or higher – 26.2 percent
- Median household income - \$64,479
- Per capita income - \$31,355
- Persons in poverty – 11.8 percent
- 1980 population – 9,679
- 2000 population – 4,824



We love where you live.

The Community

Forsyth Township, population 6,194, is located within Marquette County (population 66,017) in the heart of Michigan's beautiful Upper Peninsula. With Lake Superior to the north and the Hiawatha National Forest to the east, Forsyth Township is a great place to live and enjoy the great outdoors.

Forsyth Township, one of 18 townships in Marquette County, is the largest township (182.9 square miles) not only in the county but also east of the Mississippi River. Marquette County is home to the Tilden iron ore open-pit mine, owned by Cleveland Cliffs; the mine is expected to operate until 2047. The township also has 5.1 square miles of lakes.

Forsyth Township is located roughly 15 miles south of the City of Marquette (population 21,079) in Marquette County. The township is home to many unincorporated communities like Little Lake, Austin, Princeton, and New Swanzy, along with census-designated places (CDPs) Gwinn and K.I. Sawyer. CDPs are often statistically comparable to towns and cities, with a population concentration and clear boundaries. Forsyth Township is also home to the Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport.



Before 2000, Forsyth Township had the largest population of any township in the county but fell behind Chocolay Township following the closing of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base.



The Community con't

Incorporated in 1863, Forsyth Township became a part of Marquette County. The first permanent settlement became Little Lake, founded as a logging community and later connected by the Peninsula Railroad Company's rail line. As the timber industry waned, agriculture became more of a presence in the region. Eventually, Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company established a rail line from the Swanzy Iron Pits to the junction at Little Lake. This proved a turning point in the township's settlement history, allowing the mines in the region to operate with higher profit margins.

William P. Mather, president of Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company at the time, had plans for a community between Princeton and Little Lake developed by Boston-based landscape architect Warren Manning. The model town, designed with inspiration from the town of Coleraine in Minnesota, was called Gwinn, the maiden name of Mather's mother. It took less than three years to build this picturesque, planned community.

During World War II, mining activity began declining, and the township mines ultimately closed.

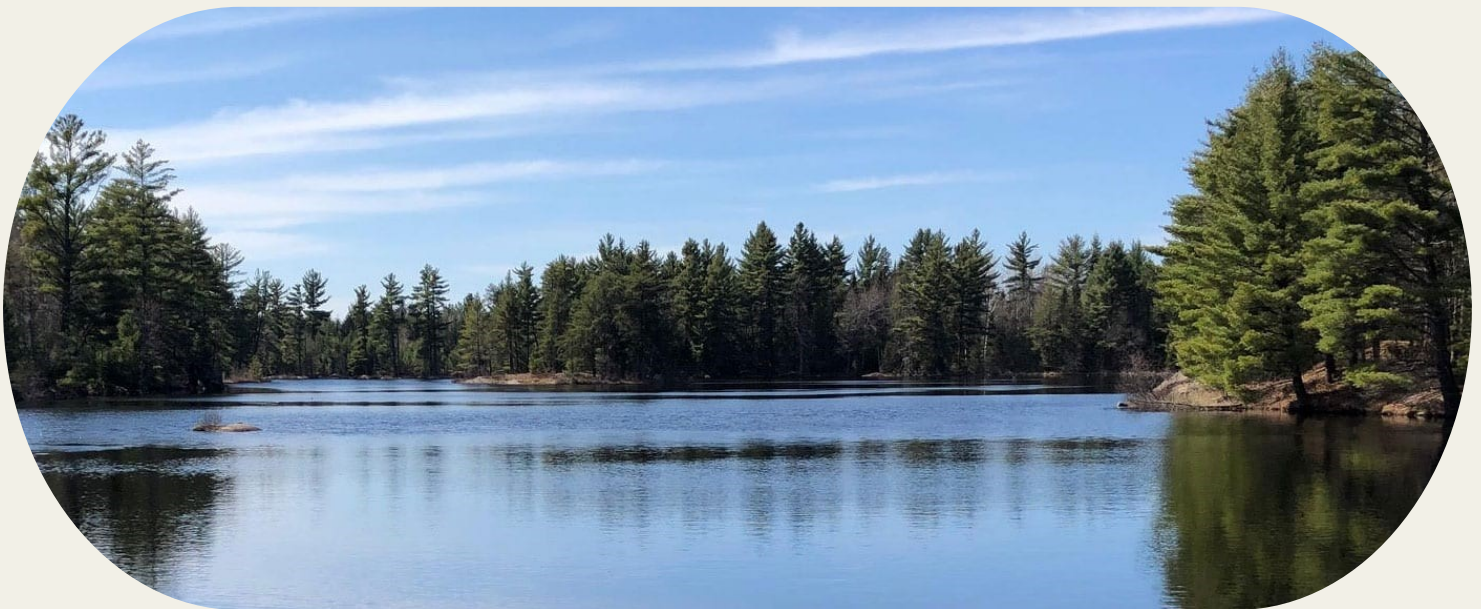
In the early 1950s, the Department of Defense established the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, spurring rapid growth within the township. It closed in late 1995, leading to a significant population decrease. Agriculture and lumbering still maintain a significant presence within the township, demonstrating community resilience and the ability to adapt to changing resources and economic opportunities.

The Gwinn Area Community Schools serves the township. It is an excellent K-12 public school district with 905 students and 165 employees. The district has two elementary schools—Gilbert Elementary and Sawyer Elementary—and the Gwinn Middle and High School.

Major employers in the township include Envoy Airlines, Superior Extrusion, Potlach, MJ VanDamme, and the Gwinn Area Community Schools.

Forsyth Forward is a recently founded community organization encouraging new hiking and biking trails to serve the township. In addition to the local government bodies, Forsyth Township has a strong volunteer base comprising residents and non-residents who care about the area's future. These organizations, schools, and community groups often fill the gaps in recreational programming, trail maintenance, and events, focusing on community engagement and real community change.

Marquette County's Sawyer Regional Airport has daily air service to Detroit, Chicago, and Minneapolis.



The Ideal Candidate

The Township of Forsyth will consider applicants who value the small-town way of life and have knowledge of local government operations and management experience.

Applicants should have:

- Minimum bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, or a related field. Experience may be substituted for educational requirements.
- Three (3) years experience in governmental management or five (5) years in business management or equivalent.
- Must have a Michigan driver's license and can be bonded
- Probationary period: 6 months
- Residency is preferred

Other skills that the applicant can illustrate in a resume or cover letter include:

- Solid financial and budgeting, as well as an understanding of the requirements and strategies for infrastructure improvement financing
- Experience in human resources development, including hiring, mentorship, performance measurement, evaluation, and professional development
- Experience in labor relations and labor negotiations
- Successful acquisition and management of grant funds
- Demonstrated ability to exercise facilitative problem-solving techniques
- An understanding of the precepts of economic development and community development in the areas of housing, placemaking, and branding
- Code enforcement experience
- Open-door policy to respectfully interact with residents, township board, township employees, and department heads
- History of inter-governmental relations and collaboration
- An understanding of chart of accounts, municipal accounting software, and daily, monthly, and year-end accounting functions. Experience with B&SA software a plus



- Capable of challenging processes
- Able to build shared visions
- A role model for appropriate behavior and professionalism
- Encouraging other people's success and ability to take action
- Ability to develop a sense of place and undertake township placemaking
- Honest with a high level of personal integrity
- Transparent in decision-making processes
- An active listener
- An innovative and creative problem solver
- Adaptive and resilient
- Self-confident with a secure sense of self
- Committed to volunteerism and community participation
- Tolerant of diverse opinions
- Support the department head's judgment and professionalism
- Encourage families to move into the township and new residential development
- Support business retention and expansion into the township

We love where you live.



Application Process

Apply by close of business: March 6th, 2025

Please submit resume, cover letter, consent form, and five professional references to:

Email:

execsearch@mml.org

Subject Line: Forsyth Township Search

Questions can be directed to MML Executive Recruiter Glenn Anderson at ganderson@mml.org.

Candidates desiring confidentiality of their interest, as allowed for and provided by Michigan law, must indicate such in a separate subject line above the body of the cover letter.

This search is conducted by an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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