

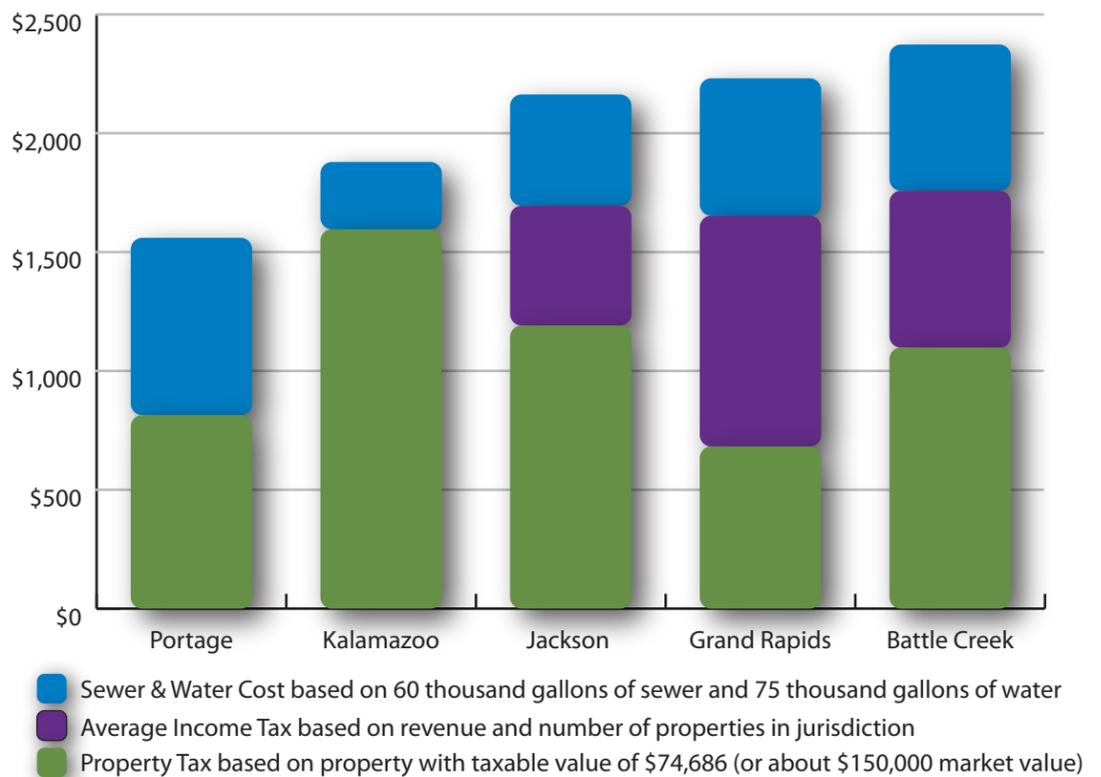


7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
www.portagemi.gov
(269) 329-4400

Water and Sewer Costs – How Does Portage Stack Up?

Supplying more than 5 million gallons of clean water every day, the City of Portage has always provided the highest quality drinking water to the residents and visitors of our community. Nested within the City of Portage water budget is the cost to fund storm sewer installation and maintenance, storm water basin maintenance, catch basin cleaning and street sweeping – all programs that help to prevent contamination of groundwater, which is the source of our drinking water. Further, the Portage utility system collects and transmits 4.8 million gallons per day of wastewater to the Kalamazoo Wastewater Treatment Facility. “Portage should be very proud of its utilities,” said City Manager Laurence Shaffer. “Not only does it provide safe, clean water, it also preserves our natural assets.”

The typical Portage residential utility customer pays about \$2 per day for water and collection and treatment of wastewater – an average of just 3 cents per gallon. Every community plans for and funds municipal programs in different ways. It is common, in fact, for communities to use general fund revenue (from property taxes and income taxes) to pay for storm water expenses rather than using utility funds like Portage does. When comparing utility costs with other communities, it is important to get the whole picture. The accompanying graph compares the overall annual cost to the typical Portage resident with those in other local communities.



Healthy Neighborhoods Create Great Communities – Be a Good Neighbor

Every great community has healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. While there are many ways to create a high quality of life in a community, many simple and common sense actions can help to maintain and improve neighborhoods, and make Portage a great place to live, work and play:

- ◆ Say hello and make an effort to get to know your neighbors.
- ◆ Maintain lawns and swimming pools and remove or properly store trash and debris.
- ◆ If your neighborhood has public sidewalks, regularly remove snow and ice or debris.
- ◆ Assist elderly or disabled neighbors with tasks that may prove challenging for them, like the removal of snow and ice from sidewalks, gutter cleaning, leaf raking or moving garbage containers to and from the street.
- ◆ Regularly maintain painted building surfaces such as walls, windows and trim; repair siding and roofing and clean rain gutters. Be sure to observe local regulations including building and zoning codes.
- ◆ Remove inoperable vehicles or store them in a garage. Park all other vehicles on an improved driveway surface.

- ◆ Do not block driveways, mailboxes or sidewalks with motor vehicles, recreational or landscaping equipment.
- ◆ Keep pets on a leash or confined to secured yard areas, clean-up after them and avoid excessive dog barking.
- ◆ Avoid playing loud music and operating domestic power tools during early morning or late night hours.
- ◆ Join or form a Neighborhood Watch group.
- ◆ Talk with your neighbors about issues that may negatively affect the quality of neighborhood life.

Desirable neighborhoods are important building blocks to a great community. Neighborhood quality can be reinforced by the efforts of its residents and being a good neighbor has a rewarding and positive effect.

The City of Portage has established community quality, housing and property maintenance codes to achieve and maintain the livability and appearance of the community. If you have a neighborhood issue or concern that you wish to report, contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4466 or 329-4477.

Hydrant Flushing Schedule for Spring 2015

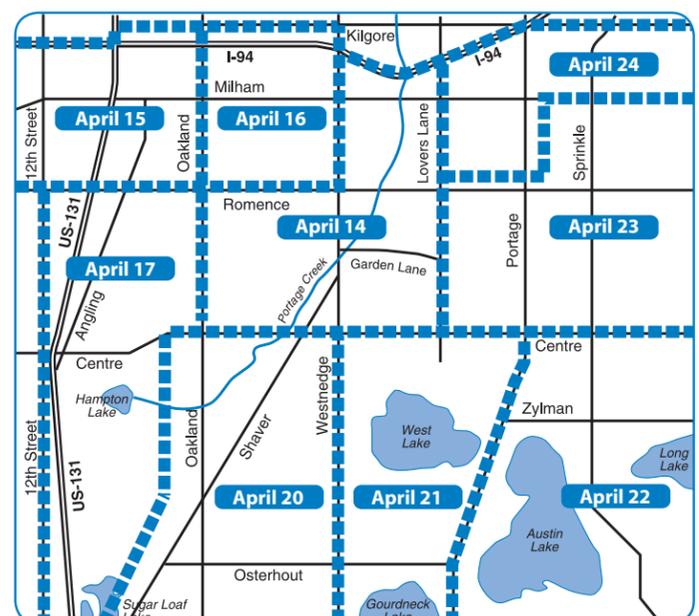
The City of Portage utility contractor United Water will conduct fire hydrant flushing from Tuesday, April 14 through Friday, April 24, 2015. The map at right indicates dates hydrant flushing will take place in each area of the city. Most hydrants will be flushed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7:30 a.m. so as to avoid high-traffic hours. This is a tentative schedule which may need to be adjusted dependent on weather and other factors.

Hydrant flushing accomplishes important objectives for the water system:

- ◆ Improves water quality by removing sediment that accumulates in the water system between flushings.
- ◆ Provides the opportunity to test proper operation of the fire hydrants and the water pumping system.

Some water discoloration will occur during the flushing process. It is recommended that you check for discoloration prior to using water for laundry or cleaning during this period of flushing. Even though water may be somewhat discolored, it is safe to drink.

During the flushing process, large quantities of water are discharged from the hydrants. Motorists are urged to watch for vehicles and workers engaged in this work and reduce speeds accordingly. Please call United Water with any questions or concerns at 324-9235.



It's Time for Spring Home Improvement Projects

Have you been postponing a much needed home improvement project such as a new roof, furnace, water heater, windows, connection to city sewer and/or water, or electrical upgrades because of the expense? Through a grant received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the City of Portage offers homeowners who meet program income eligibility requirements 0% or 3% interest deferred loans of up to \$15,000 to complete home improvements. Maximum annual household income limits are shown in the table to the right.

Household Size	Maximum Annual Income to Qualify for 0% Interest Loan	Maximum Annual Income to Qualify for 3% Interest Loan
1 Person	\$21,850	\$33,200
2 Person	\$24,950	\$37,950
3 Person	\$28,050	\$42,700
4 Person	\$31,150	\$47,400
5 Person	\$33,650	\$51,200
6 Person	\$36,150	\$55,000
7 Person	\$38,650	\$58,800
8 Person	\$41,150	\$62,600

If you qualify for a deferred loan, no monthly payments are required as long as you continue to live in your home and it remains your principal place of residence. However, you do have the option to make payments on the loan without penalty. Once you no longer live in the home, the loan and any accrued interest charges must be paid in full.

For additional information or an application, please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

Wanted: Home Improvement Contractors

The City of Portage is seeking licensed contractors to participate in the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program. This program is funded by a Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In an effort to improve housing and neighborhoods, the city facilitates the completion of home improvements between homeowners and contractors.

Licensed contractors interested in participating are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 for more information along with a Contractor Registration form.

National Flood Insurance Program

For more than 30 years, the City of Portage has actively participated in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) administered and controlled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The NFIP is a federal insurance program that allows individuals to obtain flood insurance through private insurers for property that is located in a flood hazard area. Participation by the City of Portage in the NFIP benefits homeowners and community businesses by reducing their vulnerability to costly flooding events through proactive flood reduction programs and flood insurance.



As part of the program participation, the City of Portage Department of Community Development maintains information and maps that distinguish areas that have the potential or are subject to flooding. Similar flood related information and maps are also available at the Portage District Library. The material is provided to assist property and business owners in determining if their site is located in or near a flood hazard area and potential actions that can be taken to help protect their investment. Ground elevation certificates and letters of map amendment, applicable to properties within the City of Portage, are maintained by the Department of Community Development. Assistance is also provided by the Department of Community Development to property owners seeking flood hazard area map changes as appropriate.

Those without flood insurance may wish to contact an insurance agent. Many homeowners are not aware that homeowner's insurance policies typically do not cover damage from flood events. Flood insurance is only available to communities that participate in the NFIP, and because of Portage's involvement in the NFIP floodplain management program, customers are able to obtain flood insurance at a reduced cost. Useful information can also be found at the Floodplain Management in Michigan Quick Guide website: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/lwm-quickguide_202673_7.pdf

Please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 for assistance should you have any questions or need assistance with the National Flood Insurance Program.

April is National Fair Housing Month

The City of Portage recognizes and supports Fair Housing Month and the educational activities that will help to eliminate discrimination in housing and foster equal housing opportunities. The Federal Fair Housing Act (1968 and 1988), the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1977 and the Michigan Persons With Disabilities Civil Rights Act of 1976 make it illegal to discriminate in the sale or rental of housing when the discrimination is based on any of the following factors:

- ◆ Race
- ◆ Color
- ◆ National Origin
- ◆ Religion
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ Marital Status
- ◆ Familial Status

These national and state laws protect people against discriminatory actions such as:

- ◆ refusing to sell or rent housing
- ◆ quoting a difference in housing availability

- ◆ quoting a difference in required security deposit
- ◆ quoting a different monthly rent
- ◆ refusing to rent to a family or individual with children
- ◆ sexual harassment of a tenant



If you are interested in educational opportunities regarding fair housing, or if you suspect discrimination in a housing purchase, sale or rental transaction, including a difference in terms, conditions or opportunity, please contact the Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan at 276-9100. The Fair Housing Center is available to assist persons within the Portage area with fair housing community education and complaint investigations.

For information and referral assistance, persons can also contact the City of Portage Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

Do You Recycle? City of Portage Curbside Recycling Program Makes it Easy!

The City of Portage supports the goal to reduce and recycle waste by offering the Curbside Recycling Program. The city contracts with Republic Services to collect recyclables at the curbside. One 18-gallon recycling bin is provided to each household free of charge. The recycling bin is the property of the City of Portage and must remain at the assigned address in the event of a move. Additional bins may be purchased from Republic Services and remain the property of the resident in the event of a move. To purchase additional bins, please call Republic Services at 1-888-249-5112.

Residents may also take large quantities of recyclable materials to the Republic Services drop-off facility at 3432 Gembrit Circle, Kalamazoo (see map at right).



The City of Portage Curbside Recycling Program is what is referred to as a "dual stream" collection. Glass, plastic and tin containers can be commingled in the recycling bin without sorting. However, all items should be rinsed and clean. Paper products, such as cardboard, newspaper and magazines should be

kept together and placed to one side of the bin or positioned on top of the bin. (It is suggested that paper products be placed in a brown paper bag to keep separated from other products.) Cardboard should always be flattened and/or cut down to a size that does not exceed 2 feet x 2 feet. Cardboard larger than this can potentially damage the collection equipment and may result in truck down time and route delays. The dual stream method offers the lowest risk of cross contamination of products, resulting in the majority of all items collected being accepted at the final processing facility.



Visit www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Public Services > Curbside Recycling Program to view a printable Curbside Recycling Guide that provides full details on this popular program, including what materials are recyclable, the weekly collection schedule and additional information about how to prepare materials for collection. For more detailed information or to report a missed pickup, please contact the City of Portage Recycling Hotline at 329-4416.



To promote recycling in the City of Portage, the Park Board will be holding the third annual recycled sculpture event May 16 - 23 in the beautiful Celery Flats Historical Area, 7336 Garden Lane. This is not a juried art show but a venue for area artists to express creativity and create public awareness on recycling. The event will kick off at 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 16 with musical entertainment, public viewing and a recycling vendor tent. Refreshments will be available for purchase. The artists' exhibits will be open for public viewing throughout the week.

A panel of area artists will judge the artwork based on adhering to the recycling content for eligibility, with 60% creative use of materials as they were not originally intended, and 40% overall artistry and originality. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories including a Popular Choice from visitor voting conducted on

designated days and/or the city website. The judging will be conducted on Saturday, May 16, 2015, with prizes awarded that day for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Sponsor's Choice Awards. The Popular Choice Award will be announced on Saturday, May 23, 2015, following the online voting period.

Prize Money:

First Place	\$1,000
Second Place	\$750
Third Place	\$500
Sponsor's Choice	\$500
Public Choice	\$500

The City of Portage Park Board works on quality of life activities to promote family, health and educational events for the community. For more information contact the Parks, Recreation and Senior Citizen Services Department at 329-4522.

Let's Pull Together! Help Control Garlic Mustard In City Of Portage Parks

According to Michigan State University Extension, Garlic Mustard – an aggressive invasive species – is rapidly becoming one of Michigan's worst woodland weeds. Garlic Mustard is present in several Portage parks, which has prompted the Environmental Board to host "Let's Pull Together!" events to reduce help tackle the problem. Learn why garlic mustard is a problem, how to identify it, how to remove and how to dispose of it.



- ◆ May 2 at West Lake Preserve from 9 a.m. to 12 noon
- ◆ May 16 at Schrier Park from 9 a.m. to 12 noon

No registration is necessary. For more information on Garlic Mustard and other invasive species please visit www.portagemi.gov > Boards & Commissions > Environmental Board.

Green-A-Thon

Saturday, April 25 – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Celery Flats, 7335 Garden Lane



The Portage Youth Advisory Committee, in cooperation with the Portage Environmental Board and Park Board, will host **Green-A-Thon 2015** – a community event to celebrate Earth Day. Watch multiple musical acts, play games and take home a free seedling.

Numerous representatives from local organizations and businesses will be on hand to provide education about environmental ideas you can utilize in your home or business, opportunities to volunteer for "green" causes. Meet other individuals that are committed to promoting environmentally friendly action in Portage.

Please contact Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk at 329-4512 or herringa@portagemi.gov if you have an organization or business that would like to host a table at the event to share ideas and opportunities to live green in Portage. No sign-up is required and the event is free. For more information please visit www.portagemi.gov > Boards & Commissions > Youth Advisory Committee or call 329-4512.

Portage Family Fishing Fair

Saturday May 16 – 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Ramona Park on Long Lake

Bring the entire family to celebrate the beginning of summer on this exciting day at the shoreline! Families of all ages and abilities can experience the numerous benefits associated with fishing, boating and aquatic conservation. Enjoy engaging activities and instruction from local fishing guides and professional organizations who will share their expertise to help your family start a lifetime of fishing memories. Fishing equipment will be on hand for those hoping to reel in their first (or next) catch of the day! Volunteers, sponsorships and donations are welcome. Please contact the Parks & Recreation Division at 329-4522.



- Casting and Fishing Instruction ◆ Try Out a Kayak or SUP
- Lure Making ◆ Knot Tying ◆ Fly Casting ◆ Fly Tying
- Rod Rigging ◆ Boater Safety Aquatic Habitat
- Purchase Your Fishing License
- Prizes, Giveaways and Much More!

GRAND PRIZE GIVEAWAY

A one-person sit-on-top kayak valued at \$715 courtesy of Lee's Adventure Sports!



150 kids will receive their own fishing rod courtesy of United Water!

Portage Senior Center Fundraisers

The mission of the Portage Senior Center is to provide, with the help of its members, information and a range of services, activities and volunteer opportunities that promote personal growth, health, friendship and independence for area persons over the age of 50. Partial funding for these activities is provided by the City of Portage. Additional funds are raised through membership fees, special fundraising events, trips, occasional grants, participant fees, donations and memorial gifts. Two important fundraising events that support critical programs and activities at the Senior Center are detailed below.



It's In the Bag!

Saturday, April 18
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Portage Senior Center,
320 Library Lane

Join us for the first Portage Senior Center "It's in the Bag" purse sale and raffle! Gently used purses, tote bags, name brands and knockoffs will be available for purchase at bargain prices. "Folks have donated more than 700 bags all shapes and sizes," said Senior Center Manager,

Kim Phillips. A variety of new name brand bags, donated by generous sponsors, will be raffled off during the event, so don't miss your chance to walk away a winner!

20th Annual Friends of the Portage Senior Center Golf Scramble

Monday, May 18
Angel's Crossing Golf Club
3600 East W Avenue, Vicksburg

Calling all interested golfers! The 20th Annual Friends of the Portage Senior Center Golf Scramble will be held at the beautiful Angel's Crossing Golf Club. This event is open to all ages and offers 18-hole play for \$95. Corporate sponsorships are also encouraged. After a great day of golf, enjoy lunch and camaraderie in the club house with friends and friendly competitors alike. Prizes will be awarded to winning teams in a variety of categories and a 50/50 raffle will also be held. Registration forms are available at the Portage Senior Center. For additional information, please call 329-4555.



PORTAGEALERT

Have You Signed Up?

PORTAGEALERT allows the city to send urgent voice and/or text messages to home phones, businesses, local agencies and mobile phones in just minutes during emergencies or other urgent situations.



Visit www.portagemi.gov or scan the QR Code to register your contact information. Those without internet access are encouraged to call 329-4405 to provide current contact information.

Software Upgrade Prompts Change in Account Numbers for Water and Sewer Customers

In October 2014, the City of Portage began upgrading the computer software used for many data processing functions throughout the organization, including utility (water / sewer) billing. This major upgrade provides the city with efficient and modern data processing capabilities and added functionality.

Beginning with the May 2015 utility (water / sewer) billing, customers will notice a new account number on their bill. The new account number format will include letters and numbers, and will be a combination of the customer's street name and address. For example, the

account number for the service at City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue will be WEST00790001.

How does this change affect me?

Customers who use a bill pay service through a bank or credit union are asked to contact the financial institution and change the account number. No action is necessary for customers who have signed up for Automatic Bill Payment Transfer (ACH) through the City of Portage.

Questions concerning the upcoming utility billing account changes can be directed to the City of Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455.



Director of Public Services Appointed

The City of Portage is pleased to announce the appointment of Rodney Russell to the position of Director of Public Services, effective February 10, 2015. He succeeds William Deming, who recently retired following a distinguished career with the City of Portage.

Mr. Russell was first employed by the City of Portage in January of 2010 as the Fleet and Facilities Manager. He was promoted to Deputy Director of Fleet and Facilities in 2011, with his principal responsibilities including the management of the city's extensive fleet of equipment and the management, maintenance and capital improvement of buildings and facilities. Mr. Russell's comprehensive experience and technical expertise with equipment and apparatus provides great value to Portage citizens; he has a long history of crafting creative and efficient solutions for equipment and apparatus needs. Mr. Russell was also responsible for managing city facilities and as a licensed builder, brings a practical yet knowledgeable perspective to facility needs of the city.

Mr. Russell will oversee the Department of Public Services which is responsible for snowplowing, leaf pickup and streets and parks maintenance, along with fleet and facility management. He has a Bachelor's Degree from Trinity College University.

City Manager, Laurence Shaffer said, "Rod Russell brings tremendous commitment to the position of Director of Public Services. I am confident that the citizens of Portage will be the beneficiary of his considerable talents."



What is a Red Med Box?

The "Red Med Box" program – a joint effort between law enforcement agencies in Kalamazoo County, the Kalamazoo Household Hazardous Waste Center and the Kalamazoo Substance Abuse Task Force – provides residents with a safe and secure method to dispose unwanted, unused or expired medication. Red Med Boxes are securely located at the Portage Department of Public Safety (7810 Shaver Road), the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department, the Kalamazoo Township Police Department and the Village of Schoolcraft Police Department. Citizens can drop off prescription and over-the-counter medications, in the original packaging. The name of the patient on prescription drug packaging should be blacked out with a marker, leaving the name of the medication visible. At regular intervals, the medications deposited in the Red Med Boxes are destroyed in an incinerator.

Properly disposing unused and unwanted medications protects the community against prescription abuse, addiction and overdose and keeps harmful medication residues from entering the water stream. Learn more about the Red Med Box program at www.redmedbox.com.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER

PSRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
KALAMAZOO, MI
PERMIT NO. 33

Spring Cleanup Program

April 20 - May 21

The 2015 Spring Cleanup Program details were distributed to Portage residents in the March 2015 edition of the Portager. To view program details online, including a collection map, visit www.portagemi.gov and click on the Spring Cleanup icon.

GOT STUFF?

Most household hazardous waste will not be collected as part of the Spring Cleanup Program. The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center accepts:

- Batteries ♦ Cell Phones ♦ Computers
- Cleaners ♦ Fluorescent Bulbs ♦ Gasoline
- Mercury ♦ Oil-Based Paint ♦ Yard Chemicals
- Stereos ♦ Used Motor Oil ♦ Televisions



Scan the QR Code or visit www.kalcounty.com/hhw to view the HHW Center hours and additional program details or call 373-5211.

Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. and are always open to the public.

The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Administration with concerns or complaints about city services by calling Complaint Resolution at (269) 329-4404 or by visiting www.portagemi.gov > Report It!



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Laurence Shaffer, City Manager
329-4400
shafferl@portagemi.gov

Televised City Meetings



All City of Portage City Council, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on channel 190.

AT&T U-Verse customers can access the City of Portage government meetings on channel 99 and then follow the prompts to access the various meetings.

April

- 2 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 13 7:00 p.m. Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
- 14 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting
- 16 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 28 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting