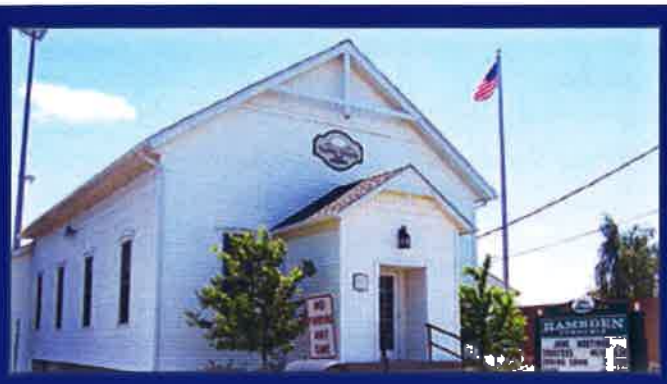


Hambden HIGHLIGHTS

Fall 2026

Fall Trash Day
Sept. 26, 2026
8am-noon

Items NOT permitted include, but not limited to:

• Tires; Household Garbage, Any liquids; Hazardous Waste/Chemicals (oil, batteries, antifreeze); Propane Tanks, Fluorescent Bulbs; Yard Debris, Rocks, Concrete Pieces; Boats, Trailers, or anything that has (or should have) a title.

Items accepted, but not limited to:

• Paint – must be dried out; toys, planters, small appliances; household decorations, television sets; refrigerators & freezers (doors off), computers; mattresses, box springs and upholstered furniture (MUST be wrapped in plastic and taped securely with no exposed material); carpet, pipes, lumber (items must be cut 6' or shorter); metal lawn mowers without tires.



From the Desk of Fire Chief Scott Hildenbrand

It is a dark day that I devote this portion of our community update to the actions of a former trusted member of the Hambden Fire Department, who betrayed us and all of you. I want to explain what occurred as clearly as I can while respecting the ongoing criminal investigation.

Richard Vandevander was a member of the Hambden Fire Department for approximately 38 years and served as the elected Treasurer of the Hambden Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. for more than 25 years. On July 27th, I received a phone call from his attorney with Richard also on the call. During that conversation, Richard admitted that he had been taking money from the Fire Department to support gambling habits. He stated that this had been occurring for approximately three years. At that time, he could not provide an exact amount but indicated that the Department did not have sufficient funds available to meet our upcoming payroll obligations.

I immediately requested his resignation and the return of all Fire Department property in his possession. His resignation and Department property were subsequently delivered to me. I then contacted Geauga County Prosecutor Jim Flaiz, explained what had been reported to me, and arranged to meet with the Prosecutor's Office and investigators the following day. A Fire Department Trustee and I immediately began securing the Department's financial accounts, changing access permissions, reviewing account balances, and notifying our insurance carrier.

Because of the financial situation we discovered, we were not going to be able to pay our firefighters for work already performed. During a special meeting of the Township Trustees and Fiscal Officer, I explained what we had learned and requested a $100,000 advance on our scheduled October payment. This allowed us to meet payroll obligations and continue paying essential utilities and operating expenses while the investigation proceeded. We did not publicly release Richard's name at that time because we did not want to jeopardize the criminal investigation.

continued on page 2

FROM THE DESK OF THE FISCAL OFFICER

Transparency and Accountability: Your Township Dollars at Work

Ohio taxpayers have an important tool for seeing how their local tax dollars are being spent. The Ohio Checkbook provides public access to financial information from participating state and local governments, including townships. Residents can access the Ohio Checkbook by visiting: Ohio Checkbook – checkbook.ohio.gov

Once there, users can search for participating local governments and review available financial information. This allows taxpayers to see how public funds are being used and better understand how their tax dollars are being spent. The Ohio Treasurer's Office identifies the Ohio Checkbook as a resource designed to increase transparency and access to government financial information.

This transparency gives taxpayers confidence that Township finances are open to public review. Financial information available through the Ohio Checkbook provides another opportunity for residents to follow their local government's spending and promotes accountability in the use of public funds.

In addition, Ohio law requires public offices, including townships, to undergo

continued on page 2