

Oxford Township Meeting Minutes
Regular meeting
April 9, 2024 6:30 pm

The Pledge of Allegiance was said at 6:30
Jennifer called the meeting to order
There were about 80 residents in attendance

Jennifer shared that we are changing the format of the meetings and read the statement below.

Statement from Chairperson regarding public forum:

The public forum is intended to afford the public an opportunity to address concerns to the Town Board. The public forum will be no longer than 30 minutes in length and each presenter will have no more than five (5) minutes to speak. Topics of discussion are restricted to local governmental topics rather than private or political agendas. The Town Board may discuss but will not take formal action on public forum presentations.

Sign up sheet is at the door.

Public Forum

- Present legal documentation and letter regarding Pigeon Loft.- Laurie Vadnais
 - She wanted to share the history of Pigeon Loft, and had some photos in a PowerPoint to share. She owns 20 acres which she inherited in 2005. Her cousin owns 40 acres on that road. She wants to set record straight. Her mom and dad entered into a CD in 1959, which was fulfilled in 1967. In 1959 her parents were 26 and 24 with 3 small kids. The road was a long sandy trail and they were the only ones who lived there full time. She showed aerial photos from 1957 and 1960. They show that the road went to their farm and stopped there. In 1963 Bliss created a corporation that was allowed to create a plat of 41 lots on west side of Hoffman lake called Holiday Beach including a 66 ft road easement called Hoffman Rd. You can see on the photo that a road existed on their property where Holiday Beach would be created and roads to the south. In 1960s a couple of members of the township board threatened that he had to open their land so people could get to Holiday beach from the north. He was told if they didn't, they would drive right through their yard. They wanted to use an old path/cartway that hadn't been used to get to the lake. Creative thinking and threats as landowners to the south didn't want them coming through, so diverted cards from the south. Her dad didn't know how to fight so let them drive through his field. In the mid 1990s big machinery came to create road without easements, warning, permission, etc. Went to Oxford Township got nowhere. Went to a lawyer and he said to sue. As a man of honor he wouldn't do that. The road cuts their property in two – they have a worthless triangle on the other side of the road. She had Kevin to measure the road surface which was 24 ft wide with an 8 ft ditch. The township won't be allowed to steal any more land from them.

Her dad planted trees to block the sight of the road. His last request was not to let the township cut his trees. The road isn't a dead issue to them. They worry about liability, more cars funnel onto their property, safety, etc. What happens when township decides to take more, Dad grieved because it was wrong what happened to him, and she feels the push to pave is also wrong.

- Gloria McDonnell
 - The March meeting was chaotic. She requests that the board determines if unqualified residents voted in March and moves to remedy that. Regarding Pigeon Loft, the main issue being brought up is that Mike will financially benefit. That leaves out the rest of the residents of Pigeon Loft. The road is 1.8 miles long, 26 on it, and 22 homes on last ½ mile. No other unpaved road in the township that has that concentration. Most have 2 vehicles, lots of other vehicles (Amazon, UPS, garbage, recycling, etc.). Residents have been coming to share condition of the road. It has been difficult to maintain. Chloride was sprayed years ago, bean oil recently, but neither worked for dust suppression. Township hired MSA to inspect and make a recommendation, which was to pave. Mike Miller has been supervisor for a long time, and the township has paid for him to attend many workshops and other training on maintaining roads so he can recommend best solutions for our roads. Currently the first ½ mile is paved, but still needs grader to get to the rest of the road. Township has spent about \$210K per year in past 3 years maintaining gravel roads, but they still aren't what is expected. Estimated cost of chloride for dust control is \$170K per year. Adding that would result in spending about \$485K per year. Paving is less maintenance annually, but some long term maintenance. Got information from Angie Larson at Isanti County Auditor's office and if property evaluations are the same, monthly taxes will decrease from \$19 – 47 per month for homes ranging from \$280K - \$680K. Feels that amount per month to improve the entire township is small.
- Brad Segula – Pigeon Loft Rd
 - Introduced to township when discussion of paving vs gravel/dust control. Condolences to the Vadnais family for what has occurred in the past. Pigeon Loft Rd does take a beating – Bart can attest that he had to do 4 passes on Pigeon Loft Rd when grading. There is lots of dust as many cars go by, and three days after grading, it looks like it did three days before. Many are making statements about what the best for Pigeon Loft when haven't driven down the road. He agreed property taxes are a concern and asked people to talk to the County Assessor.
- Rick Miller – Pigeon Loft Rd
 - He stated that he is hearing people don't want – the possible health issues from breathing the dust and cost of the medical, they don't want the dust, the washboarding and the holes, they don't want the bean oil (it cost him \$2,500 in repairs on his car), or calcium chloride. They don't want to regrade, don't want to grade, don't want pavement. Makes it hard to do anything. He's tired of damage to his vehicles – suspension takes a hit. Can't believe everyone isn't on board not to have paved roads. Rust, chips, scratched windows, dust in door jams, clothes get dusty. He is tired of us arguing and feels the way to fix the arguing is to pave the

road. He's sick of dust in his home, mud, sweeping garage, not being able to have his windows open. He feels bad when people come to visit – like he has to pay for car wash for them. People drive too fast – kick up rocks. There will be things people disagree with him on. Lots of things a mess in the world – schools, government, etc. He wouldn't think this would be as big as it is. He pays for things he don't agree with - maintenance of roads that aren't his, etc. He wants grandchildren to be able to bike, or not have to breathe in the dust. The cost to pave is only going up. We've paved a couple of roads already – we already paid for that.

- Jason Miller – forego his time
- Lynn Vadnais – forego his time
- Maggy Vadnais - What is the ordinance with paved road vs dirt road. Can you have private business on either kind of road? Bob Ruppe, the township lawyer, shared that the information would be on the Isanti County website, under zoning ordinance. There are performance standards for that. Also there are subdivision ordinances for what can divide. Believes they are currently being modified. Maggy lives on Pigeon Loft road. The paving of the road isn't the issue. The illegal taking of land that started the whole thing made them feel like things being done under the table. Want to keep transparent, honest, and with integrity.
- Mike Vadnais: Brother Kevin owns land, went to sell land to his son. Went to sell and the County said can't because its not officially a township road. Bob Ruppe said don't know for sure, but with regard to a Use and Maintenance Road under statute 160.5, Pigeon Loft Rd grew up over time like 80% of roads in MN. If the township maintained the roads for a 6 year period, the road belongs to the town. Sides of the road were the snow thrown, trim trees, ditches, etc., may also be owned. May not be at filed at the county. They may not be looking at the right information. Have the Isanti County person contact Oxford Township. To help, Bob can then send a letter confirming that it's a township road.
- Wayne Johnson – He agree with Bob that Pigeon Loft isn't registered with the county and it becomes a road by use. The problem is the width of the travelled road. The road was much more narrow, and widened in the 1990s. That was the taking of land. Bob agreed, if the town board improved the land and widened, they did take the land. But there is a statute of limitations of 6 years. Wayne stated that on 251st in 1994, were several maps showing Pigeon Loft going from Cty 9 through to Cty 20. Mike Miller in 1994 in minutes, requested 251st be closed so he could make it his driveway. Being a dead end road makes paving it cost more. Legally how can close a road? Bob replied that state law gives town boards the statutory road authority. The Township has the ability to close a road. Bob said he didn't know what happened back then. Wasn't recorded at County. He said Mike Miller could have a conflict. He added that he wasn't trying to attack Mike. Bob said he can't address something that happened 30 years ago without looking at minutes, etc. Everything regarding conflict of interest comes up a lot in his world. Regarding the question for Pigeon Loft road, he looked at that, found presently Mike doesn't not have a conflict of interest. MN supreme court in 1800s has consistently asserted that unless there is something unique about the property (as in being assessed), there isn't a conflict of interest. If just a road Mike's property abuts is being improved, it is not a conflict of interest.

Oxford Board Business

Approve agenda

Action requested: Supervisor approval of the April 2024 agenda.

Jennifer motioned to approve with additions. Mike seconded. Motion carried.

Clerk's report –

Action requested: Approve the minutes of the February regular meeting.

Approve minutes, Mike second. Motion carried.

Jen wanted a note in this month's minutes about why she voted no in Feb.

I am concerned for using the majority of our budget just to continue paving one road in the community. It might have a high resident count by road but it is not a thorough road and thus doesn't get as much through traffic as other connecting roads in the township.

We agreed to use the 2021 traffic count study for prioritizing roads and Pigeon Loft was not in the study.

I am concerned the remaining budget will not leave enough to focus on other township priorities like grading, brush cutting, and ditch mowing some much-needed roads as well as having a reserve in place to maintain roads we have already paved and matching funds in the future.

Approve minutes from March 25 special meeting.

Mike motioned to approve. Harlan seconded. Motion carried.

Review annual meeting draft minutes from 2024.

Connie wrote up change to the minutes and submitted it to the Deputy Clerk.

Treasurer's report –

Action requested: Approve the accounts receipts and payables for the month of March, 2024

Peggy read claims. Jennifer requested to discuss MSA further before approval.

Jennifer motioned to approve all but MSA, Harlan seconded. Motion carried.

Roads

- Pigeon Loft Road - [Steve Winter and Bob Ruppe](#)
 - Discuss re-bid process for Pigeon Loft paving project
 - Chair contacted Bob saying there was an allegation that we hadn't followed statutes. Typically handled by engineering firm.
 - Jen sent an email to Steve Winter at MSA. He was on vacation so had to wait until he was back. When he returned agreed some of the statutes were not met.
 - Jennifer said residents sent her the statutes, she didn't look them up.
 - Bob Ruppe wrote a letter. Steve agreed. State law is clear that the contract is void. Bob wrote a letter to Knife River saying there was an issue. They replied saying we did comply, but Bob indicated that they cited only part of the statute. He sent an additional letter which indicated that it wasn't done per the full statute and would have to be rebid.
 - Steve agreed with the history. Jennifer said hadn't had contact with Steve Winter about that. Mike didn't get in on any conversations with lawyer either, but saw emails between lawyers. So it was done wrong which necessitated redoing it. The

special meeting was just to rebid. Was re-done correctly, with the bids coming in on 4/15. Jennifer thought special meeting it was unnecessary. On-line bids open on 4/15 at 11:00. Is that open to township supervisors? Yes, Steve Winter will send a Zoom link. MSA will take the bids and open them at the meeting. Bob shared that MSA reviews and ensures all bids cover the same things, and summarize for the township. At that point the Township can reject all bids, or they have to give it to the lowest responsible bidder.

- Jen had not signed the previous contract, said Steve Winter had erroneously noted she could consider it at next meeting. For 1.5 weeks she didn't sign, so Steve reached out that he hadn't heard from her. They discussed the "at the next meeting" issue. Jen was traveling for work and wanted the weekend to read. She was told there was no timeframe. At this point, the Township contacted Bob to see about getting it signed. Was it indicated to Bob that there was a timeframe and needed to be signed? Bob shared that many townships have a vice chair to do that. Jen said at the annual meeting she had already heard that the Township may not have followed statutes.
- Jen asked MSA if we will get compensated for time spent on the erroneous quoting process? Steve Winter said the only thing on the current bill was the special meeting. Jen indicated that when she works for someone and doesn't deliver what was asked for she doesn't charge them for it. She was asking not to pay for all time up to the special meeting. Bob suggested the board approve the bill, look through the charges, and obtain a credit in future bills. **Jen motioned approve MSA bill and work with Steve to be sure aren't being charged for time for first bidding process. Harlan seconded. Motion carried.**
- Monthly Road report -[Mike](#)
 - Discuss road maintenance performed: on March 14 every road was graded. Jen asked to post the information to keep things transparent.
 - One road has 4 property owners (two houses), and they put up a "private road" sign attaching it to the street sign. Township has maintained the road. Bob indicated that per MN statute 160.2715, it is a criminal act to put up signs that misdirect people in road right of way. Sign can be removed by the town and give it back to them. If they keep putting it back up, then the township can take them to court. The sign reads: "Private Drive. Residents only. No trespassing. No solicitation." They can put in their yard if they want. Bob recommended notifying them, and asking them to remove it or the township will.
 - Mike indicated that the rest of roads are in pretty good shape.
- Road contracts- [Mike](#)
 - **Action requested: Supervisors review road maintenance contracts and potentially sign road plowing agreement**

Bob indicated that the board can approve the contract contingent on attorney review if need to complete it tonight. Jennifer said we are using his contract, and could he can fill it in appropriately. Bob agreed he could.

Mike made motion, Jen seconded. Motion carried.
- Discuss Lyons street contract with Stacy- [Mike](#)

➤ **Action requested: Approve special assessment for residents on Lyons street for road maintenance**

Stacy election is tonight. Mike said he didn't get the contract from them.

Jennifer indicated that she and Linnea got a copy. She will send it to Mike and Bob Ruppe.

No action taken.

• Comprehensive road plan- Mike

➤ **Action requested: Form a committee to work on a comprehensive road plan for Oxford**

➤ Should committee be involved in township road residents only? Or include those on county roads too? Jennifer said should include all.

➤ Jennifer wants to start a process. Mike said they had a committee that came together in past. Jennifer said that was regarding dust suppression. She wants a full plan for next 5 years comprehensively looked at.

➤ Mike shared that a small group of people were concerned about the roads. After their research they concurred that blacktop was recommended as best course. That information was shared at the 2023 annual meeting and they agreed to raise the levy \$100K for road improvements. Now new group has a new idea. Let's say all 700 voters show up and want something else. Keeps changing. Need to have a direction that doesn't move depending on who shows up. He totally gets that we should pull together a plan.

➤ Jennifer said the prior committee was about dust suppression, not a full road plan. Fair to the residents to put plan together, look at and tell residents where the money will be spent. Then can ask the residents to raise levies and will likely go better.

➤ Bob said what is being discussed is typically called a capital improvement plan. Many townships/cities have an engineer going out to evaluate the roads for that plan. They can help get the best bang for buck and can also help us sequence the work so it's done without ruining other roads. Jennifer said has a problem how we work with the engineer and relationships there. Want it done with all supervisors. Bob said you can give Steve Winter instructions to share results with all supervisors at the same time.

➤ Jennifer said board worked hard, roads great, just will help everyone if we share the info with all. Jen said doesn't get info unless asks for it. Feels there is an agenda on paving. Mike said he admits he has an agenda on paving – we aren't a small township any longer. What happened in the past is there, but when Vadnais planted trees, he planted them for a specific purpose. Mike had a chance to talk to him. His concern was that the road was migrating because as the trees grew up on the west side, it kept pushing the road into his field. Agreed. Blacktop stops migration. At the annual meeting people said Pigeon Loft a done deal, then heard there was something wrong – but Mike hadn't heard that either. As soon as heard, stopped the process. Money coming in this year was dedicated in March 2023. Dedicated to put down blacktop. Raised the levy \$100K. Jen indicated that we are spending \$300K. Mike said he heard loud and clear this year want to be diligent and prudent on how we spend the money. No problem taking some of that money to get engineering

- help with new plan. Concerned that people think Pigeon Loft still a concern and won't have it paved and will spread that money out. Jennifer said its bigger than Pigeon Loft and we should put together a preliminary request for proposal (RFP). Jennifer wanted to think about it, and put on next month's agenda. Maybe send an RFP out to a few firms and work with Bob to send out. Mike said for Vadnais' – he will make a promise/commitment that as long as he is on the board the township will not widen roads. The right of way is traveled portion, sides where throw snow, etc. Agrees that if looking at substantially widen road outside of current roadway, then "taking land."
- 251st is about 12 ft wide, maybe 14ft in one place. If you widen it to a Pigeon Loft road size that's 22 ft wide, that would be taking land. Bob indicated that if you are talking about doing gravel – if going out an extra foot, as long as stay within the traveling and maintenance part, then aren't taking anyone's land even if gravel is put on their land. If don't have an easement at the county at the recorders office, then the road is likely a use and maintenance road. If there are safety issues, the township can work with the property owner to purchase an easement, etc.
 - LRIP road grant update - [Mike](#)
 - Linwood/Oxford did not receive a grant for the 245th Avenue Reconstruction Project. Oxford Township was 86 or 88 on the list last year. Mike and Jennifer didn't look where we scored this year. Isanti County got some money, but we didn't.
 - Crack filling on 254th Ct. - [Mike](#)
 - **Action requested: Potentially sign crack filling agreement**
 - Mike indicated that before the last meeting he measured the cracks on 254th Ct and said it would be \$1200 to fill them. That wasn't accurate. Got an official quote and its **\$2,596**. Went through all roads we have that are blacktopped. Mike read the bid. He measured all the cracks and the quoting company looked at the road also. Mike indicated we could do the fixes now, or wait until next year. The road is about 7 years old.
 - Jennifer preferred we get another quote.
 - Driveway Permit- [Jennifer](#)
 - **Action requested: Approve new driveway permit for Jerry Oberg on Tucker Ct**
 - Jerry already has a fire sign we ordered for him. **Jennifer motioned that we approve. Mike seconded. Motion carried.** Jerry should send \$200 to Oxford Township.
 - No additional signs needed to order. One fire sign we need to order for Kevin Gustafson yet.

Old Business

- Isanti Fire District update- [Harlan](#)
 - There was a 39% decrease in calls from last Feb. They are doing some new training and a new fitness reimbursement program. The fire chief is attending fire investigation training next week, and decision making and communication skills training. They have a new firefighter taking classes, planning to graduate in June.
- Introduce Cathy Glatzel- taking over for Kathy Lentz starting April- [Peggy](#)
 - Thanks to Kathy Lentz for her excellent job cleaning the township hall.

- Thanks to Cathy Glatzel for being the new cleaner for the township.
- Correct mistake from 2022 Annual Meeting minutes- [Jennifer](#)
 - Pat Davis is incorrectly recorded as the moderator, Jennifer Perkins was the annual meeting moderator in 2022.
 - **Action requested: Permission from board to amend the 2022 March annual meeting minutes to document the correct moderator.**
 - **Jennifer motioned, Mike seconded. Motion carried.**

New Business

- Voter challenge from March annual meeting- [Mike](#)
 - Discuss how to handle the question of whether or not some of the levy votes were acceptable (did residents that were not eligible to vote at the annual meeting actually vote for the levies?)
 - Mike asked Bob how we handle that in the future? Some may not have been eligible to vote. The township doesn't need to verify, state law says people have to be challenged when voting. Would suggest in the future that town board have election judges available, and then follow statues they are trained on for regular elections.
 - Can't challenge after the fact, but can do in the future.
- Policy/clarification for posting information on Oxford Facebook Page- [Jennifer and Mike](#)
 - **Action requested: Propose that only official information from the board be posted and that the comment function be disabled**
 - Mike said not a social media guy but has gotten many "earsfull" from people about what is on the Facebook page. He was asked to deliver that message from residents.
 - Jennifer said is unofficial – states on the page. The website is official.
 - **No action taken.**
- Process for contract sign-off/Naming of vice chair- [Jennifer](#)
 - **Action requested: Nominate a vice chair**
 - Jennifer she wasn't asking about a Vice Chair just for help signing documents, but indicated that she wasn't sure why she was assigned chair being new to the board.
 - Bob suggested strongly that we have a vice-chair for signing, and suggested passing the resolution he emailed.
 - Jennifer indicated that at last meeting in minutes it was stated that any of the supervisors can sign. Bob said is the job of chair to sign, he suggested that we should create vice chair. He indicated for the past signing issue, that once a contract has been approved as by the board, the chair has to sign it as it is already a contract by the passed vote. There are cases when people aren't available for signing per required timelines, or have medical issues, etc., so it would be important to have a second signer.
 - **Jennifer made the motion to have vice chair**, but would hope there would be discussion with the vice chair signing documents. **Mike seconded.** Jennifer noted that positions should be reviewed annually. Mike indicated that it can be done in May with the reorganizing discussion. Jennifer thought should do every January. **Agreed to put it on the May agenda. Motion carried.**
- Consider switching from PO box to a locked mailbox at the town hall for mail- [Peggy and Mike](#)

- **Action requested: Decision from the board regarding maintain PO box or switch to locked mailbox at town hall address**
 - Got post office in 2017 for security. Peggy thought about \$700 to install a locked mailbox.
 - Current mail carrier says anyone could get into it if they wanted to. It is safer as a PO Box.
 - Recent mail carrier indicated that security more important now than ever, so why would we change to have mail delivered to a vacant lot?
 - Peggy recommended sticking with PO Box.
 - Mike concurred. He also talked to the current mail carrier and she said the amount of tampering with our mail is large. Bob looked into it at their office as well, and it was strongly recommended not to.
 - **No action taken.**
- Code of Conduct- [Paula](#)
 - **Action requested: Vote on writing and adopting a code of conduct for Oxford township**
 - Paula shared that since for many months now, our interactions at the meetings have been degrading, and asked that we adopt a code of conduct. She shared that physical punches are easy to identify, but emotional interactions need to be included also. She shared an instance that as the potential new clerk, she thought how it would have made her feel. There was a note put on a document handed out at the annual meeting making it look like the Clerk made a mistake. Working together, it seems the board should have emailed her rather than making it public. It ends up the person who wrote the comment had information over a week before the meeting indicating that nothing had been missed. So the note was indicating an error that hadn't happened, to the very large crowd at the annual meeting. Paula thought that type of thing – including comments on the Facebook page or made at meeting should be included in the code of conduct. She noted that we teach our kids how to be good to each other and about bullying, and that we can do better. The board deserves to be treated respectfully, the residents deserve to be heard, and the board has a fiduciary duty to work together for the good of the township. She believes we can do better. If we write it down and post it we can better remind each other that we can do better. She said she understands that it's hard when talking about money and land, but that we all want what's best for our area. We don't have to agree on what's best, but we do have to work together to get there.
 - Jennifer was sad I used that example. She noted that Linnea asked her to put together information on a 5-person board. She said she doesn't say anything about lots of things that happen. She requested that when the board takes phone calls that they don't disparage others. Mike apologized – not personal. Most people are trying hard to hold their tongues, and we can just move forward.
 - **Jen motioned to draft code of conduct. Mike second. Motion passed.**
- Oxford town hall rental policy- [Jennifer](#)
 - **Action requested: Assign someone to create town hall rental policy and decide on rental fee**
 - After the resident meetings there were questions about recoup costs. Jen called insurance company, should have people sign waiver. People run up on days off to lock, unlock, etc.
 - Bob indicated that most townships have a policy that renters have to sign. Some towns insurance makes a decision on whether allow alcohol, etc. Bob has a sample to use as a starting point and will send.
 - Peggy asked about a damage deposit.
 - Set a nominal fee? \$50.

- Jen recommended creating a policy and putting it on the web site. The charges would be \$50 a time to recoup costs, and a \$100 damage deposit to cover it there was damage or it wasn't cleaned.
- **Jen motioned that we create a rental policy. Mike seconded. Motion carried.**
- Voting via Zoom- [Paula](#)
 - **Action requested: Assign someone to create a policy for Oxford regarding zoom voting at the annual meeting**
 - Bob shared that for the Annual meeting voting, state law requires that people that want to vote be in attendance in person. An additional question is do we want to allow people those allow "Zoom" to participate by asking questions, etc. The Moderator would have to decide if they would be allowed to comment/participate. But again, can't VOTE if on Zoom.
- Summer market/lunch- [Jennifer](#)
 - **Discuss using town hall parking lot for once-a-month events**
 - Danielle Weiner had asked if there could be a monthly in parking lot. Wouldn't have to open hall, just use the parking lot.
 - Insurance company said fine, not in town hall, okay to do that.
 - Residents only?
 - Other outside activities? Grill during that time?
 - Jennifer would offer to come and host. Would like to donate a maintenance free picnic table for outside.
 - Bob said may want to contact the city of Nowthen to get ideas of what works and not works as they have done the same thing for the recent few years.
 - **Jennifer motioned to start with once a month. Mike seconded. Motion carried.**

Additional time for questions for Bob Ruppe

Mike Vadnais: Bob noted that when the land was taken there was a 6 year statute of limitations to fight it. So the township took the land and were in the wrong back then. The roads were widened 30 years ago, and they would have had to bring a lawsuit against the town at that time for them to stop the widening. Now plan to tar it too – so 2 wrongs make a right? Bob replied: State statute 160.05 was modified about 5 years ago, so now that can't be done any more. Anything that was in the past before this law (he thought around the year 2000), is done. Now if want to widen the road, have to notify.

Bart Perkins asked about who was responsible for the error on Pigeon Loft Road – the Clerk said at the special meeting she made a mistake, but now we're hearing it's the engineering firm. Bob replied that the clerk called Bob in tears and he told her that it was not her job – the engineering firm usually does. And it was an inadvertent mistake by the engineering firm – people make mistakes. There was a statute noted in the email sent, but that goes more to intentional circumventing of the rules, it is a misdemeanor then. Bark asked if it is okay that MSA is still involved even if wrong? Bob said that is a question for the board. People make mistakes. When he talked to Steve Winter when he returned from vacation, Steve admitted the mistake and said he would work with us to make it right.

Bark Perkins asked about the scope of work and minimum standards. Where the blacktop crosses between Pigeon Loft between the lakes there is water runoff. Tiffany Determan said we don't test for water runoff. Bark indicated that he wants to make sure we do it right the second time. Bob had no comment about that as it isn't a legal question.

(who asked this? The guy standing by the door – do we know his name?) A resident commented that at the emergency meeting said the rebidding was necessary, and it has been said here too. Why did it need to be done, and why immediately? Said following recommendation of the lawyer, did need to happen so quickly. Bob said he had a conversation with engineering, asked him if there is “gamesmanship” on when to send bid out for consideration by contractors. He has worked with townships and engineers that say you have to do bid process early as the firms are hungrier for business early in process so the prices are better. Otherwise bidding may need to be delayed a year to get the best price. The engineer thought it had to be resent out for bids sooner than later. Contract was signed, found out wrong, board voted to proceed so still needed to be done. So all of the work is still carrying forward the previous vote.

(know who this was? Guy in the middle, close to the back in the chairs?) Another resident asked about the emergency meeting again – could we have rebid this progress today? Bob indicated that its about when to do something to try to get the best possible price. Legally the special meeting didn’t need to happen quickly – he can’t say it was wrong, goes with policy and trying to get the best deal. The meeting met the open meeting law. Jennifer added that the term “the board” is used a lot, but she is not included in some things. As a board, need to be careful of using “the board” term. She is concerned that the emergency meeting wasn’t an emergency. A resident commented that this is why we don’t make progress – we keep rehashing the same things.

Bob’s shared information about his role with Oxford Township. His firm represents over 300 townships and cities. He thought it was good to try the open forum format to help control the meetings.

Connie Thorp was told that we were going to be sued over the Pigeon Loft contract. By operation of law, it was void. Bob indicated that whether we were going to get a lawsuit filed against us, he couldn’t comment. The information attorney client privilege and he felt anything he said will likely come back to him. He sent the letter to Knife River, their attorney replied and quoted only part of the statutes, so he replied with whole statute.

Richard Asleson asked about assessing residents for road improvements. In this township no assessments are added for blacktop roads. He disagrees that a dead end road has more traffic because in and out. Where everyone lives and goes to work, they come and go every time. Can’t seem to get Mike to agree that people benefitting should pay. Bob shared that financing on road improvement projects is up to the board to decide. Lots of rural towns use a statute which has the residents come to petition to get roads improved. Bob provided the board with a memo on lots of ways to finance road improvements. It was sent to the clerk and has information on the pros and cons of each. One township has a policy that at their annual meeting they do a budget for the one road they are discussing.

Gloria McDonnell asked about special assessments. Can a township do special assessments for regravelling? Bob indicated that is has to pass a test related to improved value. For example, if a house is worth \$100K, then the road is improved and now its worth \$120K, then \$20 is the highest amount that can be assessed. The values are done by appraisers, so its subjective. In most cases if going from gravel to gravel can’t see the improvement in value, or it’s harder to prove. Assessing is discouraged if the road is gravel and stays gravel. Gloria asked if the county has said paving road won’t increase value, can that be used? Bob replied that the County Assessor doesn’t work that way – the increase in value is over time. The value assessment is done by appraisers, and is a battle of experts and what they say.

Mike Bensen asked if there is a benefit in having townships record roads? Bob replied that there is no benefit. Back in 80s there was a push to record roads and townships were recommended to do so. Then there was an issue with recording them, ended up the statute was unconstitutional as it would be taking of land. Bob has gone to court with some of these issues - brought in graders, clerks, neighbors, etc., for history. A judge would issue the order that did have history, and then record it. Some recordings can only be taken with a grain of salt. Is information is helpful, but cases more rely on usage.

(gal's name) A resident had a question on how lots are split up on Pigeon Loft. Bob suggested going back to property records at the County Recorder's office. May need help from a title company, but typically the platted lot lines are accurate. Surveyors put stakes in the ground at corners which should be valid as moving those is a criminal act. Also look at GIS – not absolute, but another place to check.

Laurie Vadnais asked how their family establishes the road width right now? Bob indicated that it isn't up to them to establish, it's up to the town board if they are challenged. Statues indicate that if there is a ditch, the township has to the back of the ditch – its need for shedding water. Look at historic maintenance records for the sides of the roads. Laurie asked if there are records with the township? Bob said likely. He indicated that it's traditionally how far you throw the snow. For cases he's had, when challenged, they have waited for snowstorm and had plow come through like normal and measure how far thrown. Everyone agreed that was typical and used that.

Mike motioned to adjourn, Jen seconded. Motion passed.