

Oxford Township Meeting Minutes  
Regular meeting  
July 11, 2023  
6:30 pm

Chairperson Jennifer Perkins led the pledge of allegiance, then called the hybrid zoom meeting to order. Roll call was taken with all board members present at the town hall. Minutes of the June meeting were read with Jennifer making a motion to approve them, and Harlan Bellin seconding the motion. Following the clerk's report, Peggy Nelson gave a treasurer's report. Mike Miller made a motion to approve her report after removing the Shermik Tree Farm invoice from the list. Harlan Bellin seconded that motion and the motion passed. Next, Mike Miller made a motion to separately approve the Shermik Tree Farm claim check. Harlan Bellin seconded that motion and the motion passed.

**Roads**

1. Sarah Morisette, speaking on behalf of her mother, was at the meeting to present a petition from Pigeon Loft residents asking to not move forward with paving Pigeon Loft. She collected a number of names from residents that live on Pigeon Loft and voiced a list of concerns. One of the residents had a question about the bid process and Mike Miller clarified that it wasn't a bid process, rather he received 3 proposals. Mike also clarified that we aren't removing any trees, and Pigeon Loft will remain 20 feet wide. Mike also wanted to state that we have the finances to improve the road but haven't signed either contract to pave yet. The North Valley contracts for paving Baylor and Pigeon Loft are being voted on tonight. Chairperson Jennifer Perkins stated that she would like a strategy for prioritizing. Bart Perkins from Shermik Tree Farms spoke up to address the washboard issue. He stated that last year's trial run of oil and chips was not a success and ultimately contributed to the breakdown of the road. The rock chips are making it difficult to keep the road graded smoothly. Mike said that to date, the township has spent substantial amounts of money on Pigeon Loft for maintenance and dust suppression. Some discussion about the dust suppression task force occurred, and one finding from the task force was that paving seemed to be the preferred option for Oxford's busiest roads. Jennifer will place the task force minutes on Oxford's Facebook page, and Linnea will place the task force minutes on Oxford's website under the minutes tab. There was then discussion regarding how residents should give feedback on what they wanted done on their roads. Mike stated that he gets calls all of the time, but due to open meeting law, he cannot discuss things with the other supervisors outside of Oxford's regular meetings. Chair Jennifer stated that she has also been getting calls and heard from a resident that there were questions about whether Mike Miller had a conflict of interest since his property is adjacent to Pigeon Loft Road. Mike Miller stated that the road does not go through his property and that he does not have any potential financial gain due to paving Pigeon Loft. He does not feel there is a conflict of interest. Chair Jennifer Perkins made a motion to not approve the contract. One of the residents asked the supervisors to pave the south end of the road instead of the north end. Chairperson Jennifer stated she didn't think everything would get resolved tonight, so she reiterated she was not ready to approve the contract with North Valley to pave Pigeon Loft. Mike Miller seconded the motion to not blacktop Pigeon Loft/not approve the North Valley contract to pave Pigeon Loft. Mike Miller then made a motion to approve the contract with North Valle to blacktop Baylor. Harlan Bellin seconded that motion and the motion passed. One of the residents asked if their property taxes are going to be raised. Mike Miller explained the levy process, and how this is set by township residents at the annual meeting

in March. Linnea also mentioned that she talked to Alysha in the Assessor's office this past week. Isanti County does not differentiate between living along a gravel or paved road so this does not factor into tax increases from the county. Resident's taxes could increase if the township assessed landowners for the paving, but Oxford is not doing that. Linnea also said that if residents are interested, they can go onto the county website and get a breakdown of where their tax money is going. The township's portion of resident taxes is less than some of the other county and school district allotments.

2. The Oxford township road maintenance ordinance draft prepared by Couri and Ruppe was discussed. Mike Miller gave some background for those in attendance at the hall. There was a resident that sprayed dust suppressant in front of two houses along 259<sup>th</sup> and Potomac in the past couple of weeks. The township is working on an ordinance that only allows licensed/insured contractors to work on our roads. This ordinance will cover, at a minimum signs, applications, and grading. Once the ordinance is in place, if a resident goes against the ordinance, it will be a misdemeanor and subject to fines. Snowplowing is covered in a state ordinance so does not have to be called out in Oxford's ordinance. Bob Ruppe will have a draft ready before the continuation meeting for the board to approve. One of the residents asked Bob if a private person can alter a public roadway. Bob said that the state statute does not specifically address dust control, which is why Oxford township is working to get our own ordinance in place. Once Oxford's ordinance is published, it will be a violation of township law and considered a criminal misdemeanor which may be subject to 90 days in jail or a \$1000 dollar fine. Chair Jennifer asked if the board is required to let Oxford residents review the ordinance before the board approves it. Bob's reply was that there is no legal requirement to have residents review the ordinance. Bob will draft the ordinance this week, and Linnea will distribute to all supervisors. In addition, Jennifer will post on Oxford's Facebook page. Bob Kollmer had a question about liability. He asked if he were to get into an accident where the suppressant was applied, who does he sue? Bob replied that his attorney would most likely advise a lawsuit against the township, the contractor that applied the suppressant, and the property owner. He stated that is why the contractors that work with townships all have certificates of insurance on record.
3. Baylor will be paved in the next couple of months so is no longer in consideration for the Local Road Improvement Project (LRIP) grant submission. Mike Miller is working with the county to apply for a grant for 253<sup>rd</sup> Street west of CR 18 and will keep the board posted on progress.

### **Old Business**

1. Harlan Bellin shared minutes from the last fire district meeting.
2. Chair Jennifer gave an update on Oxford township's National Night Out. It will be Tuesday August 1<sup>st</sup> at Anderson Park from 5-7 pm. She will also post notice on Facebook and asked residents to pass the information along to their neighbors.
3. Mike brought along tools to fix the toilet in the men's bathroom.

### **New Business**

1. Oxford's board approved a temporary deputy clerk to record minutes for the August regular meeting since Linnea will be out of town. Mary and Brian Nelson have agreed to record the meeting and transcribe into minutes on August 8, 2023.

This meeting will be recessed until July 18<sup>th</sup> 6:30 at the town hall for a continuation of discussion and approval of Oxford township's road maintenance ordinance, The July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting is open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linnea Lentz  
Oxford Clerk  
July 11, 2023