

Oxford Township Meeting minutes  
Regular meeting  
September 12, 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. Mike Miller made a motion to approve the September 2023 agenda and Harlan Bellin seconded the motion. August meeting minutes were provided to all supervisors prior to the meeting. Mike Miller made a motion to accept the minutes and Harlan seconded the motion. Next, Peggy Nelson gave a treasurer's report including August accounts receipts and payables. Mike Miller made a motion to approve her report and Harlan Bellin seconded that motion.

### **Roads**

Couri and Ruppe:

The Swanson development contract (Developer's agreement) was discussed, including all steps Couri and Ruppe recommend the board take during this process. Couri and Ruppe provided the board with an email clearly outlining all of the steps prior to the September meeting for the board's consideration. Bob suggested that the town board approve the contract upon lawyer agreement so the chair and clerk can sign the agreement without waiting for another meeting. Mike Miller made a motion to approve the Swanson developer's agreement upon lawyer approval and Harlan Bellin seconded the motion. Motion passed. Bob mentioned that the plat is not signed and won't be released until we have a signed developer's agreement and escrow money which he recommends to be \$25,000. Once the paperwork is notarized, Couri and Ruppe will make sure that the plat gets filed according to regulation. The Swanson development 2 year road warranty is covered by developer's agreement and the escrow money will be enough to cover the engineering and lawyer costs as well as fees for filing the plat.

There is some question as to when part of Pigeon Loft road was turned over to the township. Mike Miller did some research and found that the road and all of the lots were platted in July of 1963 and that the property owner before the Vadnais family approved Oxford township taking control of the road.

MSA update

Pigeon Loft Road passed inspection following the paving process. Steve Winter drove the road last night (September 11) and he was pleased with how it turned out.

Steve Winter gave an update on the Local Road Improvement Plan application progress. He looked at the application that James Watters did for Oxford last time, and he has also been in contact Linwood township since 245<sup>th</sup> is a shared road. Applications are accepted today through December, and Steve is looking for direction on how much involvement Oxford wants to have in the process. He stated that once we start the application online, we have 30 days to complete it. The action item for our board is to find a way to help the project score better this year since we didn't rank very high last time. Since this is a town line road, that may help improve the score. Steve also wanted to be clear that the township will have to sponsor the project and that the grant money will go to the county first, and we could receive up to \$1.5 million dollars for the grant. In addition, Mike wants to sit down with the county engineer to look

at another road. Justin Bergerson (Isanti County Highway Engineer) reached out to Mike and North Branch township would like to improve Vassar in order to connect trails to Anderson park. Mike has requested that we assign a point person to take care of this application. Chairperson Jen asked Steve to start the application process and then engage with us on how we can best support the application. Mike Miller made a motion to have MSA start the LRIP grant process and partner with us. Harlan Bellin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **Old Business**

Harlan Bellin gave a fire district update. There were 40 runs in July, which is a decrease from last year. Training has been ongoing, and the fire district is trying to increase donations by having people round up their purchases at the Isanti municipal liquor store. Changes to the EMS response program were discussed and clarification was given on what calls volunteer firefighters should be responding to. Since they are no longer responding to EMS calls, this has saved a lot of time and money for the district. Chairperson Jennifer asked for background information on our fire service and why we don't utilize Linwood Fire for the southern part of the township. Mike Miller stated that we were looking at Linwood to supply fire service to the SE corner of Oxford. But at that time, they were not really interested in supporting it. However, recently the Linwood fire board seems more open to serving our township. Oxford board feels like this option is worth exploring again and Mike said that fresh eyes on Oxford's fire service would be of benefit. Jennifer made a motion to explore these conversations, fact find, and bring information to a future Oxford meeting. Mike seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The board continued discussing a 5 person board option. Mike mentioned that he only seconded the motion last meeting since the audience that night was passionate about bigger government. There was some confusion from the residents in attendance as to why this question will not be on a ballot for the November election. The reason this did not get filed for November 2023 is that Oxford township does not have elections in the odd year so this would be considered a special election. The motion in August was made to add the 5 person board question to the ballot. It was not specified which election or approve a special election. Mike suggested that we put the question on November 2024 when our regular election is. If the question passes, then the election would be March 2025. He also stated that we need to increase our general budget at the March annual meeting to cover the cost of a special election, which would run between \$2500-\$3000. There was a lot of discussion regarding the 5 person board, which election the question will go on, and budgeting for it. Chairperson Jennifer made a motion to put the 5 person board question on the ballot for the August 2024 primary election, and if the question passes, the election of additional supervisors will occur at the November 2024 election. Harlan Bellin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **New Business**

A Voting Operations, Technology & Election Resources (Voter) Account County-Municipality Agreement was sent to Oxford township by Isanti County. The agreement was sent to the supervisors prior to the September meeting for review. Chairperson Jennifer made a motion to approve, and Mike seconded the motion. Motion passed. Jennifer will sign the agreement and send back to the county by the due date.

Isanti County sent Oxford township a land use letter/survey to gain information for the comprehensive planning process. Oxford township was asked to choose between two options

for consideration. Oxford's preference is to be submitted no later than September 22, 2023. Chairperson Jennifer talked about the options and read off what was in the plan. Isanti county is currently 4 housing divisions per 40 acres and this survey sent to all Isanti County townships as part of the comprehensive planning process. There was much discussion between the residents in attendance and the board. Brian Swanson talked about his recent experience as he is in the process of developing his property. His recommendation is to put a maximum on one of the lots if we want to keep open space. Current zoning allows a large lot for every 20 acres. Chairperson Jennifer made a motion to choose the medium intensity (4 per 40) rural residential option with a recommendation from the township to keep the 3 acre maximum based on Brian Swanson's comments. Jennifer is adding a comment to the paperwork. Chairperson Jennifer also stated that making a major change at the county level needs more input and feels that we should continue to have conversations with the residents. Mike mentioned that we have the ability as the town board to help guide what we want our township to look like. The question is how do we want the 4 houses on 40 acres to look? Is our objective to maintain larger properties? Mike Miller seconded Jennifer's motion to choose the medium intensity (4 per 40) rural residential option with a recommendation from the township to keep the 3 acre maximum. Motion passed. Jennifer will fill out the survey paperwork and return to the county by September 22.

Black Horse Designs is having a fall festival September 29, 30, and October 1<sup>st</sup>. Chairperson Jennifer will reach out to the property owner to confirm they have the appropriate permits in place prior to the event.

Oxford township is changing the process for non-profit requests for township support. The township is going to have an application process that includes a form on our website. Chairperson Jennifer will send notification of the change out to non-profit organizations that have contracts for service in place with the township.

A resident requested that the township start recording our regular meetings. Linnea brought up that there is not a requirement for recording open meetings and that if we start recording the meetings, the recordings must be kept according to data practices and record retention laws. Chairperson Jennifer stated that the meeting minutes are comprehensive, and she recommended that we don't start recording at this time. Mike agreed with her recommendation.

Peggy will not be at Oxford's October regular meeting, so she asked that all bills be submitted to her by October 5<sup>th</sup> so she can have everything ready for the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Peggy will attend the meeting virtually.

Linnea spent 5 minutes reviewing the new Oxford township website. One resident pointed out there was writing across the uploaded copy of the plat, so Linnea will give our web designer feedback to get that changed. The board also received feedback that we should not have spent money on the website. It was felt that this could have been done by one of the board members for much cheaper.

Linnea gave a presentation about Oxford township. Following the presentation, there was a request for the powerpoint to go on the website and on Facebook. Linnea will send the presentation to Jennifer so that it will be uploaded to both places.

A resident in attendance asked what the status of the committee for future road improvement plans is. Chairperson Jennifer will be sending out a survey to Oxford residents with a number of

questions regarding road improvement in Oxford. This survey will help the board with prioritization of township road improvement. Mike asked if we want to place simultaneous road counters. He got an estimate of \$6,000 for a 24 hour period on all of the roads. Mike also mentioned that the township could buy one for a lot cheaper, but we would not be able to do simultaneous counts. Jennifer wants to discuss this information at Oxford's next meeting. Another resident asked if the ditches will be mowed in September. Mike doesn't feel they are that bad, so he recommended pushing off the mowing for another month.

Mike Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Harlan Bellin seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linnea Lentz

Oxford Clerk

September 12, 2023