

Oxford Township Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023

6:30 pm

Chairman 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 last meeting were read with Mike Miller making a motion to approve them, and Harlan Bellin seconding the motion. Following the clerk's report, Peggy gave a treasurer's report, and discussed the road allotment round up of 1 cent which she has reconciled on the receipts. She reported that the only signature registered at the bank is Peggy's so she asked the supervisors to take time to get their signatures on record. Peggy also discussed that the current snowplowing bill is confusing. Jennifer Perkin made the request that all future bills get broken up into brackets so we know what we are paying for. Mike Miller made a motion to approve the treasurer's report and Harlan seconded the motion.

Roads

1. Bob Ruppe from Couri and Ruppe was on the call to discuss Shermik Tree Farms, Inc Conflict of Interest documents and advised Oxford to adopt a resolution recognizing and agreeing to the conflict. Each time Shermik Tree Farm Inc submits an invoice to the town, Jennifer Perkins will sign the affidavit, and Oxford township keeps this on file. Mike Miller made a motion to adopt the resolution and Harlan Bellin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and Jennifer Perkins abstained from the vote. The clerk will sign the resolution, along with the chair. Moving forward, Jennifer will sign an affidavit each time we pay a bill, and Linnea will file the affidavit. Jennifer Perkins will need to recuse herself if there is ever a vote to retain or submit payment for her husband's company. If the terms of the contract change, we need to re-do the resolution and Linnea should keep these documents on file for 7 years. Jennifer asked what the township needs to if there is a tie on a bidding request, and Jen has to recuse herself. The township would need to call Mike or Bob if we ever have a situation like that.
2. Steve Winter was on the call to give an update on the 2024 budget estimate for 1 mile of pavement. Mike Miller reported that we have about \$150,000 for blacktop road, and Steve stated that we need a request for quotes. Bob Ruppe was also part of this discussion and they talked about municipal contracting law to guide when the supervisors need to get quotes. Steve also brought up the fact that the township doesn't have to go with the lowest bid, we just have to get two quotes. If the job estimate is over \$175,000, a sealed bid is required. Once the bids are opened, the township can accept a bid and award the contract, or re-bid. Steve, Bob, and the supervisors discussed how to proceed based on the estimate (provided by the engineer). Steve is willing to come to Oxford and look at the roads and see what can fit into our budget of \$150,000 and the MSA engineers will work with the supervisors to see what can get done in this next year. Part of the discussion was that the township does have the ability to finance road projects. Most towns use an assessment method, others borrow the money, and rural areas may use a different method of financing. Jen reminded the board that the \$150,000 levy increase was

not specifically budgeted for blacktop and that the supervisors have not decided how to spend that money. Steve talked about a subordinate service district which puts most of the cost on the benefitting property owners. A lot of towns have a non-negotiable policy and only pay so much for the road improvements work. The town board has to decide how much the town will contribute to the cost, and what our comfort level for debt is.

We also discussed dust control and that the town board is the statutory authority on roads and ultimately makes the choice on what to do about dust suppression. One option is that the town can help buy down the cost, but property owners may be required to contribute funds to improve their road. There is no regulatory requirement that the township provide dust control. The township can use the subordinate service district model for dust control also. Bob will send us information on the subordinate service district and the supervisors can follow up if there are any questions.

3. Rick Keller attended our meeting and updated that Lent township is close to joining with Stacy for the annexation. Rick also thanked Oxford residents for 25 years of working with him, and introduced us to Brandon, the owner of Ghost trucking. Brandon has bought Rick's business, and will be taking over road maintenance for Rick.
4. Jennifer Perkins gave a reminder to the group that one of her goals moving forward is to follow the agenda, so please let Linnea know prior to the meeting what will be discussed so that residents know what to expect at each meeting. In addition, she would like ad hoc things to be brought up at the end of the meeting.
5. Peggy discussed the current Ghost Trucking Inc bills that are difficult to understand. Now that Oxford is on CTAS, the bills are not itemized in the right way for the CTAS program, which needs material and labor separated. In addition, grading, Ice and snow all have their own categories. Peggy said that Oxford has paid up through February, but there is confusion regarding the March and April bills. Brandon said that Ghost has a new system, and emails are automatically sent to whoever is in charge of the accounting on the receiving side. He didn't realize it was doing that so he will fix it. In addition, he will add the GPS log to the invoice. Jennifer asked Ghost to separate by month so that we understand what we have already paid and what the current bill is for. Mike made a motion to pay Ghost to get up to date, and Harlan seconded the motion. Moving forward Brandon will itemize to labor and materials.

Old Business

1. Peggy updated that our township Insurance was a 9.8% increase this year. Jennifer has put a notice out to get bids from other places. She does not have the quotes yet, but she is hoping to have them by next month. To date, Oxford township has zero loss claims.
2. Harlan gave a fire district update and reported what was discussed at the last meeting. Calls are down because two months ago, fire no longer goes to all of the medicals. The dispatcher asks more questions to determine the level of response required for each emergency. If not a true emergency, they will send a deputy out.

3. At the Board of Adjustments meeting February 9, 2023, the Hesse plat (Meadow Grass Acres) was discussed. The preliminary plat of Meadow Grass Acres Second addition was approved once the single family dwelling is demolished (prior to final plat recording).
4. Linnea is going to put dust control on the May meeting agenda for discussion. Oxford township is forming a dust suppression task force, and all interested in being on this committee should contact Mike Miller. Recommendations from the group will be discussed at the May meeting.

New Business

1. Tiffany Determann was present to give the 2022 Lake Monitoring report. Tiffany brought handouts that Linnea will post on our website. Isanti Soil and Water conservation district (ISWCD) has been monitoring our lakes for 6 years now. Oxford township is Tiffany's favorite township in the county since it is such a beautiful township with clean lakes, wildlife, and lots of natural beauty. She said that all lakes in Oxford are shallow lakes, which are not great recreation lakes, but they are good for groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, and beauty. Tiffany is asking for volunteers to check water levels of each lake. Linnea will put out a call for volunteers for this summer. Tiffany mentioned that a biological survey of all vegetation was done on East and West twin in 2016. She is hoping to coordinate with the DNR to do an intensive biologic survey on all the lakes and provide a documented plant survey that will be on the DNR database. Tiffany talked with the St. Croix Research station regarding a West Twin lake investigation. They would take sediment cores from the lake that go back 150 years so we might get an idea of what happened and how to improve the water quality. ISWCD is looking for grants to help fund this as the estimated cost is \$30,000. They are also interested in analyzing East Twin lake, which would double the cost. ISWCD also plans to hold a shallow lakes workshop this fall, and has been working with Friends of Anderson park to give brochures to new home owners that live along the lakes. Mike Miller made a motion to approve the 2023 water monitoring contract. Harlan seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
2. Minnesota Association of Townships sent out a request for participation in a Broadband/digital Connection Committee. Isanti county is also discussing this, and Jennifer is active in the meetings, so she has no plan to be on the MAT committee.
3. The Isanti County Township Officers Association Meeting will be held Thursday April 27, 2023 7 pm at the Isanti County Government Center.
4. Town hall rental was requested by an Oxford resident for use in June. Jennifer Perkins made a motion to start letting people use the hall again, and Harlan seconded the motion. Linnea will let the Oxford resident know that the hall is available in June.
5. Jennifer has spent a lot of time trying to get the Logitech going again without success due to not having the reset password. Jennifer made a request to get the Logitech tech out to do a hard reset, and to get a quote to have them come out and fix it. Mike Miller made a motion to get the Logitech technician out to fix our system with a budget of up to \$2,000. Harlan seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
6. Jennifer asked if we have a process to engage our contractors to ensure checks and balances on how we utilize the attorney or engineers. Mike made the point that the supervisors can't really talk to each other outside of the town meetings. Regardless,

Jennifer would like more formality around how we engage the attorney and any consultant that charges us an hourly rate. Mike proposed that the supervisors run everything through the clerk (Linnea) and she can give visibility and get agreement from the supervisors.

7. Commissioner Kristi LaRowe attended our meeting and gave an update that ECE broadband will be covering District 5. In addition, she came to the meeting to speak for someone in the township that wants dust control, and she was happy to hear us discussing this tonight.
8. Sandy Hagan was at our meeting to discuss purchase of swingaway mailboxes, ordering emergency ID numbers, and how this was handled in the past. Sandy will give Jennifer the information so she can contact the person who does our ID signs. In addition, Sandy used to mow the lawn at the town hall. Jennifer asked if Sandy would be interested in contacting as a vendor to do our lawn care. Sandy will get his rates to Jennifer for board discussion next month.
9. Brandon, owner of Ghost Trucking was at the meeting to inform the board that he has bought Keller out, and he asked what the status of the contract is now. Mike told him that it was a verbal agreement, and that the township now has a contract with Shermik Tree Farm (Bart Perkins) that was finalized in December. We didn't call Ghost last time because the roads previously weren't done to standard, and Brandon indicated he was waiting on us to call him when we wanted the roads plowed. Mike said that Rick didn't communicate to the township that Brandon was buying the business, Mike would like to re-bid the town projects in near future. Mike also stated that Bart is in our township, and there is no travel time, which is hard to compete with. Mike Miller made a motion to have Bart do our roads. Harlan seconded the motion and the motion carried. Oxford will re-bid in 1 year, and Mike encouraged Ghost Trucking to bid. In addition, Brandon indicated that Ghost Trucking is interested in the road re-builds and graveling contracts.
10. The plan for Oxford's May meeting is to talk about road re-builds and an improvement plan for the roads. Mike will bring recommendations to the next meeting.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Linnea Lentz,

Oxford Clerk

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