

Pine Lake Township News

Volume 1, Issue 8

January 2015

Township Officials

Our regular monthly meeting is held at 7:00 PM on the 1st Wednesday of each month at the Pine Lake town hall near the intersection of U.S. 10 and County 53. You also may contact any of the following township officials:

Supervisor: Ed Roberts – 346-5252

Supervisor: Bob Sieling – 346-

Supervisor: Tim Lachowitz – 346-3127

Treasurer: Ken Guck – 346-3456

Clerk: Susan Schmid – 346-3436

Twp Elections and Voting

Pine Lake Township will hold their annual town board election at the Pine Lake town hall on Tuesday, March 10th, 2015. Voting hours are from 5 PM until 8 PM. The positions open for election are for one supervisor and township treasurer. The supervisor position currently held by Ed Roberts is for a regular 3 year term and the treasurer position held by Ken Guck is a two year term.

Filing for town board positions can be done at the home of the clerk. The filing period begins on January 1st, 2015 and ends January 15th, 2015.

Filing fee is \$2.00.

The current town board would like to take this opportunity to thank those present at the 2014 annual meeting for their attendance and interest in local government. We consider ourselves fortunate to represent the people of Pine Lake Township.

2014 Activity

In 2014 Pine Lake Township completed a couple of projects including the rebuilding of the Matz Creek culvert on the Niche Lake Road. Due to the water issues this out dated culvert has caused in the past, completing this project is of great benefit to maintaining the Niche Lake Road and providing safe and passable roads in our township.

At the 2014 Annual Meeting the Board announced they have applied for a grant from the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation with tentative plans to pave the Niche Lake Road. The township was awarded a grant in the amount of \$250,000.00.

The Board then began working with Apex Engineering to design and estimate the costs to pave the Niche Lake Road, Whispering Sands Trail and Whispering Sands Lane. Estimates and options were discussed at regular township meetings in August, September and October and then a posted special meeting was held on November 19th to discuss the tentative plans and feasibility study for the paving project with the Pine Lake Township residents. Then on December 10th, 2014 a published Public Meeting was held to present estimates of project costs and potential assessments to all of the property owners that would be affected by a tax assessment for the paving project. Individual letters were also sent to all property owners. The entire MNDOT grant will be used to offset the property owner's assessments. The general consensus from the property owners that attended the Public Meeting was positive and in favor of the paving project. Following this meeting the Board passed a resolution at a posted meeting on December 20th, 2014 to move forward with the paving project.

Other areas that have received a good portion of our township dollars are fire protection and emergency services, grading roads, mowing ditches, snow plowing and sanding, dust guard and road stabilizer and miscellaneous road repairs.

In 2014 a total of \$2,400 was donated to the Perham Area Community Center, Perham Area Library, New York Mills Cultural Center and the East Otter Tail County Fair. In order to be eligible to receive a donation from the township, the organization must send a representative to the annual meeting to make an official request and provide information about their organization.

A complete breakdown of our township income and expenses will be presented at the annual township meeting in March.

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Gophers and Beaver

Pine Lake Township currently pays a bounty on pocket gophers and beavers trapped within the township.

Pocket gopher bounty is currently set at \$2.50. In 2014 the township paid \$1,448.75 in pocket gopher bounty.

The township received \$173.85 from Otter Tail County to subsidize gopher trapping. Trappers must complete and sign a form indicating the section of the township in which the gophers were trapped. Forms can be obtained from the township clerk. The board also requests that the gopher feet be displayed on a board or cardboard in pairs. This can be done by stapling or tacking the feet to the board.

Beaver bounty is currently set at \$25. The township paid \$50 in beaver bounty in 2014. Beaver bounty is paid only when the township supervisors request that beaver be trapped in a particular area. Residents of the township that are aware of beavers affecting township roads are encouraged to contact a township supervisor.

Noxious Weeds

If your property has a noxious weed problem you will receive a notice from the township supervisors. Failure to comply with the notice is a misdemeanor and upon conviction, a fine of \$1,000 and imprisonment of 90 days is possible. In addition, failure to comply means that the weed inspector serving the notice may hire the control or eradication work done and the costs may be entered as a tax lien upon the land. For more information on noxious weeds in Minnesota refer to the document on the Otter Tail County website at

www.co.otter-tail.mn.us/land/forms/NoxiousPlantsMinnesota.pdf.

Road Ditches

Township officials would like to remind all township residents to refrain from planting crops or trees in ditches on town road right-of-way. There have been a number of incidents where this has been a sight hazard while traveling in our township. It is also difficult for farmers to make turns with their machinery if trees or crops are planted too close to the road. The township may apply for a land use fee for crops planted in township road right-of-way.

It is also unlawful for anyone to deposit any snow or ice in a public road right-of-way or to otherwise obstruct a public road. Minn. Stat. §§ 160.27, subd. 5(a)(1); 169.42, subd. Depositing snow or ice in a road also increases snowplowing costs, creates a potential public safety hazard, and could damage equipment.

2015 Annual Township Levy

At the 2014 Annual meeting township residents agreed to set the 2015 levy as follows:

General Fund: \$35,000

Road and Bridge Fund: \$200,000

Fire and Rescue Fund: \$30,000

If you would like to have input in setting the township portion of the 2016 levy please attend the annual township meeting.

Projects for 2015

There are a few areas of township roads that will require a small amount of class 5 and grading in 2015.

Township supervisors will also inspect some township roads in the spring that have some water issues that were brought to their attention at the December 10th Public Meeting. Fortunately township officials have been planning for these expenditures and have been setting funds aside in order to accomplish them without further impacting township taxes.

Annual Township Meeting

The annual township meeting will be held at the Pine Lake town hall on **March 10th, 2015** following the township election (8:15 PM). **It is vital that residents of the township attend the annual meeting to set the township portion of the 2016 tax levy. It also gives township residents an opportunity to share any concerns they may have with other residents.**