

Pine Lake Township News

January 2024

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:

Chairman: Bob Sieling – 218-3462626

Supervisor: Al Starzl – 612-743-7626

Treasurer: Ken Guck – 346-3456

Clerk: Susan Schmid –218-298-0671

Twp Elections and Voting

Pine Lake Township will hold their annual town board election at the Town Hall **on Tuesday, March 12th, 2024**. Voting hours are from 5 PM until 8 PM. The positions open for election are for one full term supervisor, one interim supervisor and township Clerk. The supervisor position currently held by Al Starzl is for a regular 3-year term, the interim term to fill Tim Lachowitzer's supervisor position, and the Clerk position currently held by Sue Schmid is a two-year term. **Filing for town board positions can be done at the home of the clerk. The filing periods begin on December 31st and end January 18th. The filing fee is \$2.00.**

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

Annual Township Meeting

The annual township meeting will be held at the town hall on March 12th, 2024, 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 2025 tax levy. It also gives township residents an opportunity to share any concerns they may have with the Board and other township residents.

2023 Activity

Road Improvements

Gravel was added to various roads where needed and Calcium chloride was also applied to some roads when needed. The graveling project 455th was completed. Substantial work was completed on 428th and a small amount of cracksealing and minor road repairs was completed

In 2023 a total amount of \$3,000 was donated to the following: Perham Public Library, East Otter Tail County Fair, New York Mills Cultural Center, and Empowering Kids. 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.

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.

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

2024 Annual Township Levy

At the 2023 Annual meeting township residents agreed to set the 2024 levy as follows:

General Fund: \$30,000

Road and Bridge Fund: \$245,000

Fire and Rescue Fund: \$40,000

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

The staff shortages and rising costs of the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) in our area will be discussed.

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 \$3.00. In 2023 the township paid \$1,284 in pocket gopher bounty. 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. Beaver bounty is currently set at \$25. 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 Otter Tail County. 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 few incidents where this has been a sight hazard while traveling in our township. The township may apply for a land use fee for crops planted in township road right-of-way. Please keep our right-of-way clear. Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to dump anything in ditches or right-of-way. Last year there were reports of leaves, brush and other debris being placed in the ditches.

Driveways -- Clearing Snow

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.

Approach/Culvert Standards

In 2020 the Board developed and passed a set of standards for residents installing approach/culverts. The township has a form that needs to be filled out and submitted with a \$100 application fee. Then a Board member will inspect the property and make recommendations to follow; a \$500 completion deposit will be placed with the Township. The \$500 deposit will be returned after the culvert is completed and approved

Projects for 2024

Township supervisors will conduct a comprehensive road inspection this spring including looking at what tar roads should be crack sealed, chip sealed, or possibly an overlay. Gravel roads will be looked at for rebuilding and or needed repairs. Please report to any of the Supervisors concerns with township roads. Funds are planned each year for these expenditures and are set aside to accomplish road maintenance and repairs without further impacting township taxes. The board will discuss at the annual meeting suggested road improvements.

Website and Email

Please visit the Pine Lake Township website at: <http://www.pinelaketownship.org>
The township email address is: pltotc@arvig.net