

Pine Lake Township News

Volume 1, Issue 6

January 2012

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 Larry Bucholz – 346-3172

Supervisor Jon Swyter – 346-2493

Supervisor Ed Roberts – 346-5252

Clerk Margaret Mattfeld – 346-5480

Treasurer Ken Guck – 346-3456

Elections and Voting

Pine Lake Township will hold their annual town board election at the Pine Lake town hall on Tuesday, March 13th, 2012. Voting hours are from 5 PM until 8 PM. The positions open for election are one supervisor and township clerk. The supervisor position is currently held by Ed Roberts and the clerk position is held by Margaret Mattfeld. Both Ed and Margaret have re-filed for their respective town board offices. No other members of the township have filed for either of these positions.

The board would like to take this opportunity to thank those present at the 2011 annual meeting for their attendance and interest in local government. We consider ourselves fortunate to represent the people of Pine Lake Township.

2011 Activity

Actual receipts were \$295,305.54 and actual disbursements were \$177,972.74. The receipts included tax receipts, interest, licenses, market value credits, gopher bounty reimbursement, gravel pit sales and dust control reimbursement. Included in the disbursements were costs associated with building up the Niche Lake road. 2011 saw expenditures on Niche Lake road of \$15,725.19 for road building. Ottertail Aggregate's total bid for this project was \$163,327 while the actual amount of the contract came in at \$144,607. After an inspection was done in 2010 the road work was completed in 2011. It was accepted by the town board and final payment was made.

Also in 2011 Pine Lake Township contracted with Ottertail Aggregate to crush gravel to replenish the township gravel pit. The cost of crushing the gravel amounted to \$39,760.00. This gravel will be used to upgrade the township gravel road surfaces over the course of the next several years. More on this topic will be covered at the annual township meeting.

Other areas that receive a good portion of our township dollars are fire protection and emergency services - \$23,247.81, grading roads - \$25,697.15, culverts - \$6,108.64, mowing ditches - \$3,036.75, snow plowing and sanding - \$16,790.03, dust guard and road stabilizer - \$13,947.72, and miscellaneous road repairs. The township hall building was also re-sided at a cost of \$4,558.90.

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

At the 2009 annual meeting a few years ago, residents of Pine Lake Township decided to base township donations on a percentage of tax receipts. This allows residents of the township the ability to provide funds to various organizations in the community. A total of \$2,500 was donated to the Perham Area Community Center, East Otter Tail Historical Society, 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.

2012 Annual Township Levy

At the 2011 Annual meeting township residents agreed to set the 2012 levy as follows:

General Fund: \$35,000

Road and Bridge Fund: \$210,000

Fire and Rescue Fund: \$30,000

These levy amounts did not change from the 2011 levy. If you would like to have input in setting the township portion of the 2013 levy please attend the annual township meeting.

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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. Last year the township paid \$3,392.50 in pocket gopher bounty. The township received \$370.65 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. Beaver trapping 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

The supervisors will be conducting weed inspections again this spring. If your property has a noxious weed problem you will receive a notice from the 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.

Submitting Bills for Payment

If you have a bill you would like to submit to the township for payment please contact the township clerk. Submit the bill by the Monday before the monthly township board meeting. Monthly township meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month. Any bills not submitted by this deadline may not get paid until the following township board meeting.

Nitche Lake Road

In 2009, a petition was brought before the town board requesting the Nitche Lake road be rebuilt and blacktopped. It has been the town board's position that the township would be responsible for the reconstruction of the road in preparation for blacktopping. The area land owners would then be responsible to pay for the engineering fees, attorney's fees, cost of additional meetings and cost of blacktopping the road.

Now that the reconstruction of Nitche Lake Road is complete, it is suggested that interested area land owners form a committee to investigate the costs related to blacktopping the road. The committee would be responsible for working with the town board in selecting an engineer. The engineer would be required to identify the residents that would be responsible for assuming the costs of paving the road. The engineer would also be required to provide an estimate for the blacktopping project and devise a method to distribute these costs equitably to the responsible land owners.

Once a plan for blacktopping and cost allocation has been identified the engineer would bring this before the town board for approval. Several informational meetings would be held before any decision would be made on blacktopping the road.

Board of Review

The annual Board of Review will be on Wednesday, April 25th from 9:30 – 10:30 AM at the town hall. If any resident wishes to question their property tax assessment they can attend this meeting with our county assessor.

Annual Township Meeting

The annual township meeting is held at the Pine Lake town hall on March 13th, 2012 following the township election (8:10 PM). It is vital that residents of the township attend the annual meeting to set the township portion of the 2013 tax levy. It also gives township residents an opportunity to share any concerns they may have with other residents.