

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER - 2020

Northfield Township Board

Foster Transburg, Supervisor (First elected in 2020) 612-213-6954

Brian Peterson, Supervisor (First elected in 1998) 507-649-1888

Ron Sommers, Chairperson (First elected in 2012) 507-645-7058

Jessi Hubers, Treasurer (First elected in 2019) 612-242-8817

Diane Lyman, Clerk (First elected in 2018) 507-663-1068

Township email:
northfieldtwp@northfieldwifi.com

The Town Board meets at 7:00 P.M. on the second Tuesday of each month. The known exception is the month of March. The 2021 Annual Meeting will be held on March 9 and the regular March 2021 meeting will be held March 11. Meetings are held at the Northfield Town Hall located at 10901 Jacobs Avenue. If there is a change from the regular meeting night, a notice is published in the legal notices of the Northfield News when time allows, and a notice is posted at the Town Hall. While under government recommendation with regard to COVID-19 protocols, notice will be posted at the town hall with regard to accessing meetings online.

Residents are invited to attend the monthly meetings. If anyone has a special concern to be discussed on the monthly agenda, please call the clerk by Monday noon prior to the meeting date.

Snow Season

Residents are reminded that according to MN Statute 160.2715 **it is illegal and punishable as a misdemeanor to plow, shovel, or place snow onto township roadways.** Similar rules apply on county and state roads. **Snow from your property should be plowed and stored on your own property and not pushed across roads.**

Civil penalties may apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard that contributes to a motor vehicle crash or pedestrian injury. The civil penalty can extend to both the property owner and the person who places the snow.

Some reminders on Northfield Township's Snow Removal Policies.....

The township's plow usually does not go out until a snowfall has ended. The plow will not be sent out during a time when poor visibility will make plowing dangerous. When possible, the driver alternates starting the snow removal from one of the four quadrants of the township – north, south, east, and west. The starting point rotates with each snow event. Salt, sand, and chips are applied, as needed, to increase the safety of the road surface. The township is not responsible for snow thrown in driveways, damage done to mailboxes, fences, etc., due to thrown snow or equipment hitting these objects, or damage to landscaping within the road right-of-way.

Road Maintenance

Northfield Township maintains 37.85 miles of roadway. Each spring the supervisors determine which roads need crushed rock. Heavily traveled roads may need crushed rock every year, but most roads are on a two or three-year cycle. Weather permitting, crushed rock is scheduled to be delivered and spread on roads in late May or early June, and dust control is applied as soon as possible after the new crushed rock is graded. The township has warning signs and barricades that can be put in place to alert drivers to hazardous conditions or roads that are temporarily closed. Please call one of the township officers if you find debris on the roads or other dangerous conditions so that they can resolve the problem or take action to warn others if needed.

Dust Control

Most of the roads maintained by Northfield Township have a gravel surface, and a few of the roads maintained by the county within the township also have a gravel surface. Each year, the application of liquid chloride is made

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available to residents to control dust. The cost of this dust control is paid by the residents requesting it. The application of chloride is scheduled after the crushed rock has been delivered and graded. Weather and gravel availability through our vendor are the biggest factors in the timing of application.

In April, residents who participated in dust control the previous year are mailed information about the program. Anyone wishing to apply for dust control for the first time can call the clerk for more information. Stakes are available for marking the area where residents wish to have dust control applied. One of the supervisors rides along with the truck driver who is dispensing the liquid chloride to help with making sure that the product is applied at the correct residences.

Burning Permits

Burning permits are available on-line through the Minnesota DNR's website: www.dnr.state.mn.us/burningpermits. The applicant needs to provide their name, address, phone number, and the legal description of where the burning will take place. The legal description can be found on a tax statement or deed for the property. Information on the website will tell you how to activate the permits on the day or days when you want to burn. The permits are valid for the calendar year. If you have questions about what can be burned and when, visit the DNR's website: www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/fire/questions.html

Driveway Permits

Permits for new driveways, additional driveways or revisions to current driveways and field approaches must be approved by the township board for residents who live on a road that is maintained by the township. If you live along a county or state road, you must contact the appropriate entity. Driveways must be built according to MN Statute 160.2715. The cost for a driveway permit in 2021 is \$100. When applying for a driveway permit, a resident must also pay a \$500 deposit. When the driveway

has been completed, the driveway is inspected by a supervisor and if the requirements have been satisfied, the \$500 will be returned to the resident. Please call the clerk or one of the supervisors if you wish to obtain a driveway permit application.

Right-of-Way Permits

Permits are soon to be required for any work to be done in the right of way. The right of way includes driveway and ditch areas and driveways up to the edge of and to the midpoint on a township road. A Right-of-Way Permit is being developed and will be available from the Clerk and/or on the township website www.northfieldtwp.org

Building Permits

Planning and zoning in Northfield Township is handled by Rice County. Residents needing a building permit should contact the Rice County Planning and Zoning Office.

Wild Parsnip

Wild Parsnip, a noxious weed, the sap of which can cause severe burning and blistering of the skin especially in the presence of sunlight, is found in many areas of Minnesota, often in road ditches and adjacent grassy areas. Township supervisors, in an effort to reduce the impact of this weed, have explored various control methods.

In 2018, we began a collaboration with Bridgewater Township and in 2019 we secured a one-year financial grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) which allowed us to adopt a stronger wild parsnip control plan. Nancy Braker, Manager of the Carleton Arboretum, and Neil Slifka of the Minnesota DNR provided assistance. Infestation levels along township, county and state roadways within the two townships were surveyed and the data entered into a computer mapping system recommended by the DNR. Ditches along roads maintained by Northfield Township were sprayed by a township employee using equipment that allowed us to specifically target wild parsnip infested areas.

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Grant funding also allowed us to expand our spraying program to include infested areas along County and State road ditches within the two townships where infestations were most severe.

Because of the success of our program, we invited Greenvale and Waterford townships to join Bridgewater and Northfield townships and were fortunate to receive a two-year MDA grant (2020-2021) totaling \$50,000, to be shared between the four townships. In 2020, road ditches were again surveyed and areas of wild parsnip infestation along Township, County and State roadways in our township were target-sprayed by a township employee. Greenvale, Waterford and Bridgewater townships conducted similar programs.

While the Covid-19 pandemic hampered public meetings relating to this program, we plan to share survey information with community leaders including County Commissioners, State Legislators, Highway Engineers, DOT Managers and others in an effort to build on our success and promote the adoption of similar programs in neighboring townships and counties and across the state. Without continuation of these control efforts, Wild Parsnip will, due to its invasive capability, regain territory and become a public health hazard for residents who venture into road ditches and grassy areas. In the interest of public safety, it is our goal to control noxious weeds and invasive trees in the township right-of-way.

If residents have road-ditch areas along their property where they wish to have no spraying, "Do Not Spray" signs can be purchased for \$15 per pair including 2 signs and two posts. The signs should be clearly visible facing traffic and should mark the beginning and end of the "do not spray" area. *In "do not spray" areas, the property owner is responsible for keeping the posted area clear of all noxious weeds. The township reserves the right to spray if noxious weeds in the posted area are not removed by the resident.* Please call the clerk or one of the

supervisors if you wish to purchase and install these signs. Do Not Spray signs must be in place by **June 14, 2021**.

Elections

The town hall served as the polling place for our residents for all 2020 elections. We thank all of you for your cooperation in following the COVID-related protocols to make sure the election process was safe for all. In November our election judges did an amazing job with getting folks checked in, ballots distributed, assisting at the ballot box when needed and keeping the polling place clean. We have the finest folks working to make sure your voice is heard. Northfield Township had an impressive 92.2% voter turnout (early, absentee and in-person voters)!

The Northfield Town Hall will continue in 2021, to be the polling place for Northfield Township residents for township, state, and federal elections as it has been in the past. Absentee ballots are administered by the Rice County Property Tax & Elections Department.

Township Day in Minnesota – Election and Annual Meeting

In 2021, the Township Election will be held on Tuesday, March 9th. To be elected in 2021 are one supervisor for a 3-year-term (position currently held by Ron Sommers) and one treasurer for a 2-year-term (position currently held by Jessi Hubers). Filing for these offices begins on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 and ends at 5 P.M. on Tuesday, January 12, 2021. Affidavits of candidacy can be filed with the clerk at 9090 100th St. E., Northfield. Please call the clerk (507-663-1068) to arrange a time to complete paperwork. The filing fee is \$2. On March 9th, the polls will be open from 2 P.M. until 8 P.M.

The township **Annual Meeting** will be held follow the closing of the polls on **March 9**. Due to COVID concerns, it is not certain if this meeting will be held via Zoom or if we will be able to meet in person following MDH guidelines. If we are able to meet in person, the

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meeting may be held at Red Barn Farm on the corner of Jacobs Avenue and Co Rd. 81 (110th St.) to accommodate numbers. Information regarding meeting style will be posted at the town hall 10 days prior to the March 9 meeting date.

A Note from the Clerk

Last March we welcomed Foster Transburg to the town board as Supervisor. Rotating off the board was Mike Groth who served as Supervisor for 24 years. We appreciate the many years Mike has given to the Board as both a Supervisor and as a grader and snowplow operator! There is so much that goes on behind the scenes to support the infrastructure and residents of our township. Your supervisors are always on call and on the lookout for the safety and well-being of our residents. I thank all of our elected officials for their service and hope you will express a word of appreciation to our current board members when you see Ron, Foster, Brian and Jessi out and about. Be sure to give Mike a word of thanks for his years of service as well.

This has been an interesting year. We held some board meetings online and some at the town hall wearing masks and distancing. As you are well aware, these options are challenging both technologically and socially. We look forward to a time when we can meet, share smiles and shake hands again!

CARES Act Funding

Northfield Township was allotted \$22,075 from the federal CARES Act for use in paying for equipment and services needed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to comply with remote meetings, social distancing and PPE. The board was able to acquire technology equipment and services, as well as launch a website with these funds. Any unused funds were required to be turned over to another government entity. Of the \$22,075, expenses in the amount of \$7,808.48 were incurred and the remaining balance of \$14,266.52 was turned over to Rice County, per CARES Act guidelines,

to aid in covering some of the COVID-19 expenses incurred at the county level.

Township Website

The township is in the process of getting a website up and running. The addition of information to the website is ongoing as time allows. You can visit the website at www.northfieldtwp.org

Everbridge Citizen Alert

Rice County Emergency Management utilizes the Everbridge Citizen Alert system as one way to notify residents of an emergency or an important community alert.

This system allows the Rice and Steele 911 Center to quickly provide you with critical information in a variety of situations, such as certain severe weather events, missing persons, or hazardous and/or dangerous incidents that may lead to evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods.

Once enrolled, you will receive time-sensitive messages via how you specify, such as your home phone, cell phone, business phone, email, or text message. You can subscribe to the type of notifications you want, and can also set a window of time not to receive any notifications, if you choose.

You must be signed up in order to receive notifications and be alerted of an emergency that may affect you. All Rice County residents are encouraged to sign up for this free service. The information entered is protected and will not be used for any other purposes.

To initially sign up, update your contact information, or change your alert settings, go to <https://member.everbridge.net/453003085612579/login> . Direct links to the login page can also be accessed from several places on the Rice County website, including the Sheriff's Office and Public Health. Any individuals who need assistance can register by calling the Rice and Steele 911 Center at 507-444-0341.