**TOWN BOARD**

Corky Berdan – Supervisor

c.berdan@belgradetownship.com

507-317-9424

Bryan Bode – Supervisor, Vice-Chair

b.bode@belgradetownship.com

507-327-6384

Christopher Frederick – Supervisor, Chair

c.frederick@belgradetownship.com

507-382-7299

Mary Milbrath – Supervisor

m.milbrath@belgradetownship.com

507-388-3911

Shane Nelson – Supervisor

s.nelson@belgradetownship.com

507-720-8282

Joan Untiedt – Clerk

clerk@belgradetownship.com

507-382-9214

John Speckel – Treasurer

treasurer@belgradetownship.com

507-381-6532

Mailing address for township correspondence:

P.O. Box 2075

North Mankato, MN 56002-2075

**MEETING SCHEDULE**

 **2024**

February 13 Board of Audit Meeting

February 13 Regular Meeting

March 12 Annual Meeting

March 19 Regular Meeting

April 9 Regular Meeting

May 14 Regular Meeting

June 11 Regular Meeting

July 9 Regular Meeting

August 13 Regular Meeting

September 10 Regular Meeting

October 8 Regular Meeting

November 12 Regular Meeting

December 10 Regular Meeting

  **2025**

January 14 Regular Meeting

February 11 Regular Meeting

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**The annual meeting of Belgrade Township residents will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at Crossview Covenant Church, 2000 Howard Drive W, North Mankato.**

All residents of the township are encouraged to attend. The agenda will include review of financial data from 2023, setting the levy for 2025, and other business pertaining to the township. As a reminder, a town resident who is eligible to vote at a general election may vote at the town’s annual meeting.

If inclement weather requires postponement of the meeting, it will be announced on the radio and/or KEYC-TV. The alternate date will be Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 7:00 at the same location.

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**NEWSLETTER AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Any correspondence and the annual newsletter are mailed to the landowners listed on Nicollet County records for our township. If there is an error in your address, please contact the county office to get it corrected. The township does not maintain a separate list of residents that may rent from a landowner or are part of a business group.

**KERN’S ESTATE CULVERT REPLACEMENT**

In late July 2023, Holtmeier Construction, along with Nicollet County, completed the installation of a 12’ x 9’ box culvert on the eastern portion of the road in Kern’s Estates. The culvert replaced the failing 66” and 90” concrete culverts. This project has been worked on since 2019. Thank you to the residents of Kern’s Estates, Nicollet County, Holtmeier Construction, North Links Golf Course, and Belgrade Township for their time and patience during this construction period. Please take a drive to see the finished project!

**2024 ELECTIONS**

The following township positions will be on the upcoming 2024 general election:

Supervisor A Shane Nelson term of 4 yrs

Supervisor B Mary Milbrath term of 4 yrs

Supervisor E Christopher Frederick term of 4 yrs

Town Clerk Joan Untiedt term of 4 yrs

Town Treasurer John Speckel term of 2 yrs

The filing dates for township offices will be from
July 30, 2024 until August 13, 2024. Please contact the Town Clerk for more information and Affidavit of Candidacy form to complete.

Important dates for 2024 elections:

March 5, 2024 Presidential Nomination Primary

August 6, 2024 Primary Election

November 5, 2024 General Election

Belgrade Township votes by mail ballot. If you are not registered, you need to register online as soon as possible. Go to mnvotes.org to register online or to check if you are registered at your current address. Ballots will be mailed to registered voters approximately 30 days before the election. These ballots may be mailed back to the Nicollet County Government Center or dropped off on election day. If you prefer to vote in person, you may cast your ballot at the Nicollet County Government Center located at 501 S. Minnesota Ave., Saint Peter.  **REMINDER – YOU MUST BRING YOUR MAIL BALLOT WITH YOU TO CAST YOUR BALLOT IN PERSON.**

**DUST CONTROL**

The township does not contract dust control application for township roads except for the hills. Residents should contact a provider of their choice to have dust control applied if desired.

Concerns were expressed by residents regarding the grading of the road through the dust control that was applied. The township will not grade through dust control application unless, for safety reasons, the road has washboards and/or potholes that require grading.

**ROAD MAINTENANCE**

Our employee, Harlan Olson, did an excellent job keeping the roads in shape throughout the summer considering the dry conditions. Many of the issues arising from grading seem to revolve around the skill of the grader operator. The surface structure and stability of a gravel road depends on the skill of the operator. An improper grading technique can cause an insufficient or excessive crown, the loss of gravel, the creation of ridges, and other situations that can negatively impact a road and create liability.

Olson monitors the condition of the roads, signs, and right-of-way on a weekly and daily basis. The town board does an annual road tour in the spring of the year.

The biggest problem was roads become washboards. This is created by the speed, excessive acceleration, and braking of motor vehicles. To eliminate wash boarding and cut down the amount of time grading the roads, please slow down!



**LITTERING**

Minnesota Statutes 169.42 addresses littering and dropping objects on vehicles or highway.

* No person should throw, place, or dump objects on any road or highway, including any public or privately owned land adjacent to the road.
* Any person who drops or throws objects upon the road shall immediately remove them.
* If you have a wrecked or damaged vehicle on a road, remove any glass or substance dropped upon the road from the vehicle.
* No person should drop or throw objects at or on a vehicle.
* Any person who violates the provisions of this statute is guilty of a misdemeanor.
* If you see anyone violating this law, please contact the sheriff’s office immediately.

**SNOW AND ICE CONTROL**

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 160.2715 (a)(1), it shall be unlawful to obstruct any highway or deposit snow or ice thereon.

* Depositing snow or ice on the road increases costs to snowplow it off, creates potential public safety, and could damage equipment and vehicles.
* Do not obstruct any township road by blowing, depositing, piling, plowing, or scraping snow or ice across the road.
* The snow can create very slippery conditions contributing to the buildup of ice and formation of snow drifts. Compacted and frozen snow piles can damage cars as well as equipment.
* During severe snowstorms, all calls requesting emergency snow plowing assistance should be directed to “911” emergency number. Non-emergency calls regarding snow plowing should be directed to a township supervisor.
* When following or meeting a snowplow, allow room for the vehicle to work. When a snowplow backs up, they have limited visibility to the rear. Do not crowd the plow!
* Be alert – snowplow operator stops frequently to ensure their lights are free of snow and ice buildup and are clearly visible.
* Turning your lights on is important to make yourself visible on the road to the snowplow operator as well as other drivers.
* Remove objects (including machinery and hay bales) in or near the right-of-way to allow the snowplow access to push the snow. This also reduces snow drifting on the roadway.



**WEED CONTROL**

Noxious weeds have been cited during the annual road tour. Definitions of the noxious weed categories from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture can be found on their web page: [www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list)

Restricted noxious weeds are plants that are detrimental to humans and animals. The only feasible means of control is to prevent their spread by prohibiting the importation, sale, and transportation of their propagating parts in the state, except as allowed by Minnesota Statutes 18.82.

Residents are asked to report any sighting of noxious weeds that need to be eradicated or stop the spread. Please contact one of the town supervisors.

**TREE TRIMMING**

Under Minnesota Statute 160.22, subd. 7a, a tree or shrub is defined as being at least six inches in diameter, as measured at a point two feet from the ground. A hedge means any planted and maintained hedge within the right-of-way will be treated as brush and removed, as necessary.

With this same statute, subd. 10, any tree, hedge, or shrub within the limits of any town road may be cut and removed when they interfere with the maintenance and with the safety and convenience of the public. The abutting landowner will receive written notice of the intent to trim trees or remove brush.

During the month of October 2023, a Forestry Head Trimmer was rented to clear the right-of-way. This trimming was necessary for public safety, equipment use, and liability to the township. After reviewing different options, this equipment was chosen because it was the safest and most economical method for our employees to complete the job. The first phase of the trimming started south of Highway 14. The next phase of work will start as time allows.

**SETBACK REQUIREMENTS**

The Township has adopted the same setback requirements as Nicollet County. Please visit the Nicollet County Zoning Permit Fact Sheet for detail information at www.co.nicollet.mn.us/341/Planning-Zoning.

Along a roadway, you can plant trees, hedges, and shrubs that are more than 2’ tall no closer than 20’ from the right-of-way. Trees and bushes less than 2’ tall can be planted up to the right-of-way. The setback from ditches is 100 feet. The township mirrors the county setback of 50’ from the right-of-way.

**RIGHT-OF-WAY USE**

Minnesota Statute 160.2715 outlines the right-of-way use for our roads. It is unlawful to (not inclusive list):

* Obstruct any highway or deposit snow or ice thereon
* Plow or other operation within the road right-of-way except in preparation of the land for planting permanent vegetative cover as authorized under section 160.232
* Erect a fence on the right-of-way of a town road
* Remove any earth, gravel, or rock from any road
* Obstruct any ditch draining or drain any materials into any ditch
* Place or maintain building or structure within the limits of any road
* Deface, mar, damage, or tamper with any structure, work, material, equipment, tools, signs, markers, signals, paving, guardrails, drains, or any other highway appurtenance on or along any highway
* Drive over, through, or around any barricade, fence, or obstruction erected for the purpose of preventing traffic from passing over a portion of a highway closed to public travel or to remove, deface, or damage any such barricade, fence, or obstruction

Any violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

Right-of-way is defined as 33 feet from the center of the road.

**ASPHALT MAINTENANCE**

Imagine driving down our township's roads, not on smooth asphalt, but on a bumpy, pothole-filled nightmare. Sounds unpleasant, right? Unfortunately, that is the future we face if we neglect our current three miles of asphalt roads. While these roads serve just a few developments, their neglect can cost the entire township dearly.

Asphalt roads require consistent care. Just like our cars, they wear down over time with use and weather. Cracks appear, shoulders crumble, and potholes open like hungry mouths. Leaving these issues unaddressed is like ignoring a ticking time bomb. Small cracks become gaping chasms, requiring costly full replacements instead of affordable repairs.

Think of it this way: patching a crack costs a few hundred dollars, while replacing the entire road can run into tens of thousands. Investing in preventative maintenance now saves us money and stress overall.

But how do we pay for this upkeep? Setting up a dedicated asphalt road maintenance line item in our budget is crucial. This ensures the necessary funds are readily available for patching, sealing, and resurfacing before roads reach the point of no return.

Let us work together to keep our roads in good shape and our community thriving. Contact your township representatives and voice your support for a dedicated asphalt road maintenance budget. Remember, a few dollars today can save us all thousands tomorrow.

**TOWNSHIP EQUIPMENT**

The new 2024 International HV613 truck is currently in production at Crysteel to have the box and plow equipment installed. Anticipated delivery of the completed truck should be in February. After the new truck is put in service, the current 2000 Freightliner will be sold. Please contact a supervisor if you or know of anyone interested in purchasing the truck.

**GARBAGE CONTAINERS**

Please make sure garbage and recycling containers are properly placed and not in the roadway. Carts placed in the road can become an obstacle for drivers and difficult for the snowplow to clear the roads quickly and efficiently.

* Place your cart at the end of the driveway at least three feet away from the road. The garbage truck can still access the carts and allow the snowplow to get through.
* Do not put the garbage cart on top of a snow pile. The garbage truck will not be able to reach the cart and the cart may tip over.
* Remove carts as soon as possible after the garbage truck has emptied the carts. Empty carts can tip over and become a road hazard and impact snow removal.



**SIGNS**

No person shall alter, deface, or remove any signs on township roads. According to Minnesota Statutes 169.08, any person in possession of a sign could be subject to prosecution.

It is unlawful to drive over, through or around any barricade, fence, or obstruction erected for the purpose of preventing traffic from passing over a portion of a road closed to public travel. A person cannot remove, deface, or damage any such barricade, fence, or obstruction.

The township has experienced theft of road signs. If you note any damaged or missing signs, please notify one of the supervisors. If you are witness to a theft in progress, please call the sheriff.

**NICOLLET RURAL-CITY FIRE ASSOCIATION**

Belgrade Township is part of the joint powers board of the Nicollet Rural-City Fire Association.

The fire department named Jeremy Sieberg its new chief and Justin Laven as the assistant chief. The department received a new tanker truck in early fall. A grant application has been submitted for a new pumper truck.

Total calls in 2023 were 149 with 47 in Belgrade Township.

**LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) is a grant program of State Aid for local transportation administered by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. It provides funding assistance to local agencies and federally recognized agencies for construction, reconstruction, or reconditioning projects. Funds are appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature in the 2023 legislative session for a combined total of $102.967 million. At least $6 million must be for grants to townships.

Bolton & Menk firm was hired to assist with the filing of LRIP applications for 496th Street and 526th Street in the township. Applications were submitted in December and notification of grant awards should be posted in April 2024.

**SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) offers a township scholarship program for high school juniors in the state of Minnesota. They will award up to five $2,000 scholarships. The scholarship program is designed to heighten awareness among young people about Minnesota’s Grassroots Township government. Applicants must submit their application by June 1, 2024. For more information, visit <https://www.mntownships.org/about/scholarship-program>.

**VACATING A ROAD IN OUR TOWNSHIP**

There has been talk and buzz about the possibility over the years about the process involved to vacate a township road/cartway. It might seem like a complex procedure, but with the right information, it can be navigated smoothly. In this newsletter, we will break down the steps involved and highlight relevant Minnesota statutes.

**Reasons for Vacating a Cartway/Road:**
There are several reasons why a township might consider vacating a road:

* Lack of use: If a road is no longer serving its intended purpose and sees minimal traffic, it might be a candidate for vacation.
* Safety concerns: A road with safety hazards or posing a danger to the community might be vacated.
* Development considerations: In some cases, vacating a road might be necessary for future development projects.

**The Process:**
The process for vacating a road in Minnesota is outlined in Chapter 164. Here is a simplified overview:

* Petition: A petition signed by at least eight voters who own real estate within three miles of the road must be submitted to the town board.
* Hearing: The town board will schedule a public hearing to consider the petition. Notice of the hearing must be published in a newspaper and posted in public places.
* Investigation: The town board will investigate the proposed vacation and consider factors such as public safety, impact on surrounding property owners, and alternative access routes.
* Decision: After the hearing and investigation, the town board will vote on whether to grant or deny the petition.

**Relevant Statutes:**
Here are key Minnesota statutes to keep in mind:

* Minnesota Statute 164.07: This statute outlines the general process for establishing, altering, or vacating a town road.
* Minnesota Statute 505.14: This statute outlines additional requirements for vacating a road that abuts or terminates at public water.

**Additional Information:**
For more detailed information on the process, you can consult the Minnesota Statutes website or contact a Board Supervisor. It is important to remember that vacating a road is a permanent decision and should not be taken lightly. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the town board.

**TOWNSHIP SHOP BUILDING**

In 2023, the town board hired a firm to look at the shop building structure and check for leaks on the roof. The report showed the building in decent shape with no leaks. At a future time, a drain needs to be cut in the building and a bathroom facility installed.

**TOWN REVENUE AND ANNUAL LEVY**

The primary source of revenue for town government is property taxes paid by the residents. The town receives the tax money twice a year, once in June, and again in December. Any remaining property tax proceeds are distributed in January.

It is important to distinguish between the budget and the levy. The budget is produced by the board to suggest a plan for spending in the next year. The annual property tax levy is set by the voters at the annual town meeting. The town clerk must certify the amount of the levy to the County Auditor annually by September 30th according to Minnesota Statutes 275.07.