

Royalton Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes

6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006

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31 August 2021

Approved

7:30 p.m., 31 August 2021, Chair Wayne Olson called the Royalton Township regular board meeting to order, with Supervisor Marshall Pearson, Supervisor Jeff Schlaeger, Treasurer Wendy Tchida, and Clerk Duane Swanson present. Road Superintendent Dan Saumer and Deputy Clerk Priscilla Schneider also attended, along with members of the planning commission and members of the public. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Olson seconded, to approve the agenda as presented with three additions: staffing, emergency exit door, and 3623 State Highway 70. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Olson seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of 27 July 2021 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Tchida gave her report, noting that the township has a balance of \$543,374.31 in the treasury. Chair Olson reminded the board that \$61,268.06 of the balance is COVID-19 aid that is restricted to certain uses and cannot be used for general fund items. Supervisor Pearson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to approve the report. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Pearson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to approve payment of checks #10114-10144 in the amount of \$64,316.43. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Olson, Supervisor Pearson, and Supervisor Schlaeger voting "aye".

Public Forum was offered. Mike Lucht asked about the post-election procedure for handling the ballots during state and federal elections. Clerk Swanson outlined the procedure for Royalton: After the polls close, the ballot box in the counting machine is opened; the ballots are counted to ensure that the number of ballots equals what the machine totaled and the number of signatures on the roster (the individual votes are not tallied). When that number is verified, the counting machine totals are run. The ballots are sealed in envelopes with the election judges signing over the flap. The clerk then takes the sealed ballots to the County Auditor's office where custody is exchanged. Prior to election day, a public accuracy test open to the public is held to determine that the ballot counting machine is accurately programmed. A set of pre-marked ballots is fed through the counting machine; after the totals are verified, the machine is locked to prevent any tampering. Clerk Swanson stressed that all post-election activities are open to the public and that Royalton's election judges must have party balance so that no one party has a majority of judges at any time during the day.

Doug Stanger thanked the board for upgrading Raspberry Road South with new gravel. He suggested that it be left ungraded as an experiment in how it would hold up without grading. He also asked if the new constructions on Homer Road were permitted. Deputy Clerk Schneider provided Mr. Stanger with the information that both construction projects were residences and that each had the necessary permits, although neither project was yet completed.

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Planning Commission recommendations:

Chair Olson and Supervisor Schlaeger reported on the planning commission meeting: The amendment to the zoning ordinance was tabled for more discussion at the working commission meeting; the Roger Teich land splits will be removed from the agenda until further clarification and requests are received. The septic fee schedule and the zoning checklist draft will be studied at the next working commission meeting.

Daniel Berkness was present to seek approval of the land split request of proposed lot #2, PID 290244001 (William Saumer's land off Woodland Road). He provided board members with a rough sketch of the property, a revised certificate of survey, and a soil observation log for the boring sites on the lot. The survey showed that the one boring site originally too close to the lot line had been moved away sufficiently from the lot line. The planning commission had recommended approval of these documents. During discussion, it was determined that the Zoning Administrator had not reviewed these documents, although they appeared to answer the board's questions from the July meeting. After discussion, Supervisor Pearson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to approve the land split for Lot #2 from PID 290244001 based on the certificate of survey by Hancock Surveying, dated 31 August 2021, and the soil boring soil observation log of Jones Construction Services, dated 31 August 2021, and to authorize the clerk to report the same to Pine County zoning **only** after Zoning Administrator Kemen had given his approval to the clerk. The motion carried unanimously.

Due to the requestors' change of plans, the proposed agreement with Justin and Marta Asher regarding an older-than-approved mobile home will be removed from the agenda.

Old Business:

Clerk Swanson reported on ongoing septic issues: No further updates had been received on 9003 Wildflower Road, and that issue will be removed from the agenda. He reported that Septic Inspector Amy Thompson reported that the new septic system at 1238 Sherwood Street is in and she is waiting for the electrical hookup before a final inspection can be done. He further reported that legal counsel had sent a letter to the owners of 3546 State Highway 70 giving them until the end of August to have a compliance inspection done. The owners have talked with both Zoning Administrator Kemen and Septic Inspector Thompson and a compliance inspection has been promised. None of these issues requires board action at this time.

Clerk Swanson distributed a draft of an amendment to the agreement with Septic Inspector Thompson to provide inspection services to the township, essentially detailing how she will be paid for required attendance at town meetings. Chair Olson referred the draft to the planning commission for review and comment.

Under zoning issues, the situation at 4201 State Highway 70 was discussed. The amount of cars and business at this property increases weekly. Court action determining the ownership of the property is scheduled for October. At the request of Zoning Administrator Kemen, Clerk Swanson presented a draft of a letter to the occupant of the property requesting discussion of a conditional or interim use permit to operate a business. After discussion, the board tabled the permit issue. Chair Olson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to authorize the office to correspond with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regarding the possible disposal of

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used oil and antifreeze on the property. The motion carried unanimously.

Zoning Administrator Kemen will continue to investigate the status of 1702 Royal Heights Lane.

Clerk Swanson reported that the land split of 1677 Greeley Road has been finalized and the Beacon website updated. This issue will be removed from the agenda.

Clerk Swanson reported that both Zoning Administrator Kemen and Septic Inspector Thompson had been in contact with the owners of 2294 540th Street. The owners have asked the county to combine the two parcels as requested by the board, although that combination is not yet shown on the Beacon website. Application for a septic permit is in process.

The board reviewed the insurance coverage on the town's structures. Chair Olson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to request MATIT, the town's insurance carrier, to initiate a site survey with the potential goal of having all structures covered on a replacement basis rather than on a defined amount basis. The motion carried unanimously. By consensus, the board decided to leave the clerk's and treasurer's bond coverage at its current limit of \$300,000.

Two of the town's septic tanks had been pumped and a bill received. [Subsequent information revealed that the maintenance shop tanks were inspected and found to contain too little material to warrant pumping.]

The town is awaiting a proposal to upgrade the town hall's sound system.

Supervisor Pearson updated the board on his positive discussions with the new building inspector. He reported that Steve Thorp is anxious to meet with Royalton officials to streamline procedures and to learn what the town needs from him. Permits and inspections have been continuing. Chair Olson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to approve and sign the agreement with the city of Braham to provide building inspection services to Royalton through December 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Swanson distributed an updated road report containing the status of 2021 road projects. He thanked Road Maintenance Superintendent Saumer for his cooperation in keeping the report current. Chair Olson asked that this format continue to be used to keep the board updated.

The board reviewed photographs that appear to document that gravel from 540th Street is being pulled into the driveway at 3160 540th. Supervisor Pearson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to authorize the office to write a letter to the owners demanding that this practice cease and to include the copies of the photographs in the letter. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Olson showed the culvert inventory notebook that Road Superintendent Saumer had prepared, noted that this contained the location and status of nearly 300 culverts for which the town is responsible, and thanked Superintendent Saumer for his extra time and effort in completing this task. Superintendent Saumer noted that he is still locating culverts that were hitherto unknown.

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Chair Olson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to approve Clerk Swanson's draft letter to Nessel regarding 540th Street and to include the invoice for Nessel's share of the upgrade. The motion carried unanimously.

Gary Valvoda and Les Orvis reported on discussions regarding a truck replacement search, noting that many questions existed. Chair Olson requested that the Road Maintenance Supervisor attend the next working planning commission meeting to create a list of required specifications for the truck.

New Business:

Chair Olson acknowledged the receipt of the first (of possibly two) installments of COVID-19 relief monies from the American Rescue Plan Act, noting that the monies need to be encumbered by 2024 and spent by 2026. The monies can be used only for certain COVID-19 relief measures.

Chair Olson moved, Supervisor Pearson seconded, to approve and sign the agreement, dated 1 August 2021 with the city of Pine City to provide fire suppression services for a portion of Royalton Township from 1 August 2021 through 31 December 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Olson continues in discussion with individuals involved in the situation at 3623 State Highway 70.

Priscilla Schneider submitted a letter of resignation as Deputy Clerk, dated 31 August 2021, and effective 31 December 2021. She will continue as a member of the planning commission. Chair Olson thanked Mrs. Schneider for her excellent work during the past years. By consensus, the board reluctantly accepted the letter. The board then discussed at length the need for additional staff time to deal with the increasing workload in the office and asked Mrs. Schneider to begin drafting a list of responsibilities that would form the basis for a job description. Clerk Swanson distributed to the board a research paper from the Minnesota Association of Townships about options for organization of townships.

Supervisor Schlaeger questioned why the emergency exit door is alarmed during rentals and is an alarm on the door needed at all. There were questions about state requirements, if any. After much discussion without any consensus, Chair Olson will continue to investigate options with the security company.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no correspondence.

FYI:

Letters were sent to Tom Madison and Wayde Lerbs as requested at the July meeting; the boat and trailer have been moved back from the road right-of-way. The newly-adopted solar ordinance has been filed with the Pine County Recorder. Travis Kemen installed the clerk's new computer and synced it with the existing computer and with the public monitor in the hall. The completed 2022 levy certification form was filed with the Pine County Auditor.

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The next town board meeting will be 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, 28 September 2021.

At 8:30 p.m., Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Pearson seconded, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk

Wayne Olson, Chair/Supervisor

Jeff Schlaeger, Vice Chair/Supervisor

Marshall Pearson, Supervisor

Wendy Tchida, Treasurer