

Royalton Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006
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29 August 2023
Approved

7:40 p.m., 29 August 2023, Chair Marshall Pearson called the Royalton Township regular board meeting to order, with Supervisor Jeff Schlaeger, Supervisor John Graham, Treasurer Jenessa Saumer, and Clerk Duane Swanson present. Zoning administrator John Kemen, Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, Road Superintendent Dan Saumer, and Deputy Clerk Andrea Anderson also attended, along with members of the planning commission and members of the public. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the agenda as presented, with the addition of hall rental, resignation, building upgrades, and Braham Fire Department. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of 25 July 2023 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Saumer read her July report, noting that as of 31 July 2023, the township had a balance of \$555,740.91 in the treasury. After including income and outstanding checks, the balance was reduced to \$545,155.11. The report noted that \$104,229.84 of that balance is ARPA/COVID-19 aid that is restricted to certain uses, leaving a spendable balance of \$440,925.77. Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to approve the report. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Saumer noted that the electronic payment process for ECE bills is going well. She requested permission to establish electronic payments for CenturyLink bills and for payments for federal withholding taxes. Chair Pearson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to authorize Treasurer Saumer to establish said accounts. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Pearson called for discussion of checks #10885-10909 in the amount of \$17,415.74. Chair Pearson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to approve payment of the bills. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Pearson, Supervisor Schlaeger, and Supervisor Graham voting "Aye."

Public Forum was offered. Former Treasurer Wendy Tchida noted that she had no control over updating information to the State of Minnesota's financial systems, even though the system still has her personal phone number and email on its records. The office has been unable to update these accounts because of the double verification system required for changing passwords and email access.

Tom Madison shared his concerns about the reclamation activities adjacent to his property and continuing dust issues.

Patrice DeGray noted the difficulties logging into the state's withholding sites.

Planning Commission recommendations:

Richard Hultman presented his plan for a boundary adjustment for PID 29031500 by adding 200' depth to the north side of the parcel, in order to accommodate future septic sites. Septic Administrator Thompson and Zoning Administrator Kemen endorsed Mr. Hultman's plan; the planning commission recommended approval. Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to approve Mr. Hultman's request and to authorize the clerk, if requested, to forward approval to Pine County. The motion carried unanimously.

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Brian Eklund was present to express his interest in purchasing the township gravel pit adjoining his property. He will give an offer in writing. The township's conditions would be retaining easement rights to the turnaround on the parcel at the east end of its portion of Sage Drive and that the purchaser accept responsibility for any foreign materials that may appear on the property (none are known to exist). By consensus, the board decided to move forward with a survey of the parcel and to consult counsel.

Old Business:

Septic report: Clerk Swanson noted that a list of newly sold properties had been received from Pine County. Of the seven parcels on the list, five have compliant SSTS systems, one has upgrades pending, and one is in discussion. An individual who was a previous part owner in the parcel purchased the parcel in discussion, PID 290262001 (4050 State Highway 70). The warranty deed showed a \$100,000 purchase price. Septic Administrator Thompson reported that it was her recommendation that the board require a compliance inspection. After discussion, Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to require a compliance inspection on this parcel, in accordance with Royalton's zoning ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

Septic Administrator Thompson noted that she had received some information from the designer of Mitchell Thompson's systems on Bears Ear, but the drawing did not have distances from the property lines, etc., that would enable approval of the systems.

Chair Pearson noted that members' packets contained an updated 2023 septic report.

Zoning issues: Clerk Swanson noted that Pine County had not received a reply from their third, final notice of non-compliance for building permit issues at 5214 Royal Woods Road (PID 295137000), and that this issue would be sent to the county attorney for enforcement.

Zoning Administrator Kemen will consult with the county about the oversize, unpermitted sign at 110 Greeley Road.

The board received reports that the dwelling at 7876 Bluebell Road had been upgraded with new windows and possibly additional improvements but that no permits had been pulled. By consensus, the board ordered that a letter be sent ordering construction to stop and permits to be pulled, with a copy to Rum River Construction Consultants.

Road report: Chair Pearson noted the 2023 road report update in members' packets.

Supervisor Graham reported that culvert and ditching had been completed at 10601 Country Drive, but that there remained a concern that the ditching did not go far enough. He recommended that the check for the work be held until negotiations are finalized for additional ditching.

The culvert at the intersection of Bear Claw and Bear's Ear has been repaired and additional ditching has been completed. The mailbox placement has not been resolved. Supervisor Graham distributed a draft letter to the Pine City postmaster requesting that the mailboxes be moved to Bear Claw. By consensus, the board approved the draft and authorized Supervisor Schlaeger to deliver it to the postmaster.

Tom Madison was present to give additional details about the contents of the fill used in reclaiming parts of the Lerbs' mining pit. Mr. Madison maintained that organic matter that would decompose was included in the fill against state and county policy. He provided statements that he maintained proved that the interim use permit regulations were not being followed, specifically, relating to the access road and dust issues. Pine County may now be involved in discussions about these issues. Leslie Orvis noted that if Mr. Madison has engaged an attorney all conversations with the township should cease. Mr. Madison replied that an attorney has not been engaged.

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There were no updates on the forming of a fire district.

Supervisor Graham updated the board on the grader purchase, noting that production is ahead of schedule and that the delivery time remains in early November. He recommended, and the board concurred by consensus, that John Deere take the current grader in trade at the price agreed to.

Chair Pearson reported that he had in hand three quotations for yardwork, including mowing and weed whipping, but not shrub trimming. He recommended accepting the estimate of Rasmussen Services LLC at \$80 per time, with usual cuttings of once per week except in dry weather. He noted that this bid approximates what Road Superintendent Saumer would cost the township to do similar work when one includes the cost of gas and equipment. After discussion, Chair Pearson moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to hire Rasmussen at the agreed quotation. The motion carried with Chair Pearson and Supervisor Schlaeger voting "Aye" and Supervisor Graham abstaining. Supervisor Graham explained his abstention because he had submitted one of the quotations and therefore, had a conflict of interest in the decision. The board then continued to discuss the seeding or sodding of parts of the lawn. By consensus, Chair Pearson was given authority to investigate cost of these projects.

Clerk Swanson reported on his attendance at the MAT District 7 meeting, at which Tammy Carlson was elected director and legislators and MAT staff delivered updates.

New Business:

By consensus, the board decided not to purchase a wall map of the township for \$199.99.

Zoning Administrator Kemen updated the board on two utility permits by ECE for broadband connections. The permits will be signed when each is paid for.

Clerk Swanson presented the newly received property valuation forms for township structures, noting that per MATIT policy, coverage would be replacement value only and the township would be receiving a bill for the added value. The board offered no objections to the valuations.

Chair Pearson reported that the 2024 Minnesota town aid had been certified at \$2,879.00.

Clerk Swanson reported that he had been asked, hypothetically, if the town hall rental policy allowed for-sale events like garage sales. By consensus, the board noted that such sales could occur, assuming they complied with all other requirements of the rental agreement.

Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to accept with regret the resignation of back-up road operator Alexander Anderson effective 29 August 2023. The motion carried unanimously. Supervisor Schlaeger noted that a person had expressed interest in the position. During discussion, the board agreed that an individual must have at least a Class B commercial driver's license and must submit a health card to the township. An announcement of the job opening will be on the township bulletin board and on its website.

Clerk Swanson noted that some physical improvements to the town hall and property would enhance workflow and operations. Specifically, the file room could use a set of cabinets and one of the town's septic tanks needs to be relined. Chair Pearson will investigate options.

Clerk Swanson distributed invitations from the Braham Fire Department for the open house BBQ on 13 September. All township officers are invited. The invitations contained additional information on the fire department and its proposed service contract.

Chair Pearson returned to the issue of the township gravel pit and its proposed sale. An interested buyer submitted a written cost proposal. Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to engage a

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surveyor to mark the extent of the property and to begin negotiations for a purchase agreement, subject to two conditions: that a turnaround be included as part of the agreement and that any foreign materials located on the property in the future be the responsibility of the new owner. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Pearson will engage a surveyor. Chair Pearson and Clerk Swanson will discuss with legal counsel.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

FYI:

Chair Pearson reported that the 2024 levy certification had been sent to the Pine County auditor.

The next regular meeting of the town board will be at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, 26 September 2023.

At 9:20 p.m., Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk

Marshall Pearson, Chair/Supervisor

Jeff Schlaeger, Vice Chair/Supervisor

John Graham, Supervisor

Jenessa M. Saumer, Treasurer