

Royalton Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006
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21 November 2023
Approved

7:31 p.m., 21 November 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. 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, Chair Pearson seconded, to approve the agenda as presented, with the addition of Zoom meetings and Art Pangerl. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of 24 October 2023 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Saumer noted that she had revised the treasurer's report form. She read her October report, noting that as of 1 October 2023, the township had a balance of \$531,312.47 in the treasury. Deposits were \$5,553.34; disbursements were \$19,618.53, leaving an ending balance of \$517,247.28. After subtracting outstanding checks of \$11,144.62 and the restricted COVID Fund of \$104,229.84, the spendable balance was \$401,872.82. Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to approve the report. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Pearson called for discussion of checks #10969-10994 in the amount of \$5,011.24. Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson 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. No one spoke.

Planning Commission recommendations:

Chair Pearson noted that he and Clerk Swanson had met with legal counsel relating to Road T13 and that counsel was studying the issue and the proposed affidavit desired by Kevin McFerran. Gary Folkestad, one of the original signers of the petition to gate the road, was present to share his memories. He opined that no maintenance had been done on the that road since the 1960s or 1970s, that it was being used by trespassers who dumped tires, appliances, and other garbage on owners' properties, and that it was becoming a nuisance to the owners. He recalled that the board had discussions with Attorney Barry Bloomquist about changing the road into a cartway (or some other term) that would limit access. He shared his opinion that the current owners wanted access to their parcels but did not want the township to maintain the road so that the public would have easy access to their parcels. Kevin McFerran was present to second Mr. Folkestad's opinions. Chair Pearson thanked Mr. Folkestad and Mr. McFerran for their comments and noted that discussion with counsel would continue.

Supervisor Graham reported that he had visited the owner of the dogs allegedly running loose on Buffalo and Pokegama Lake roads. The owner is attempting to train them to remain on his property. Supervisor Graham had left a voice message with the complainant to that effect. No further information has been received and this issue will be removed from the agenda.

Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to approve the draft position description for the secondary road operator. The motion carried unanimously.

Brett McDonough was present to discuss the situation with his trailer house on Royal River Road. Earlier this summer, he had come to the board with Jeff Jefferson about selling his home to Mr. Jefferson, who would move it to Mr. Jefferson's lot down the road. Mr. Jefferson's trailer would then be destroyed or moved out of the township. Paperwork was submitted at that time, but it was requested that it not be activated until the deal was finalized. No

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finalization has occurred. Mr. Jefferson removed the windows and roof deck from Mr. McDonough's home, but since then, the deal has been stopped by Mr. McDonough. Mr. McDonough showed pictures documenting the damage done to his home. Mr. McDonough asked the board if he needed a permit to return the house to its original condition. He was given contact information for the town's building official. Mr. and Mrs. McDonough left the meeting.

John Graham and Clerk Swanson updated the board on discussions about the turnaround at the end of Royal Heights Lane. The Braham Bus Company had expressed concern about vehicles sitting in the right of way creating a hazard for the school buses. Theresa Fox-Stenberg, a landowner adjacent to the turnaround was present to express concern about squatters living on the parcel at the end of the road. She told of garbage, tires, and other refuse being placed on her property to the extent that she could not use the existing driveway. She noted that the landowner apparently was not living on the property. After reviewing the location, etc., Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the following plan: 1) Clerk Swanson would contact the Braham Bus Company seeking a letter explaining the problem; 2) Supervisor Graham would contact the Pine County sheriff's office seeking a visit to the property; and 3) the township would send a letter to the landowner noting the presence of vehicles in the right of way, apparently illegal squatters living in a camper, and the presence of garbage. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

Septic issues: Chair Pearson noted the septic report in members' packets; no action was necessary. Septic Administrator Thompson reported that the repairs to the system at 4050 State Highway 70 (PID 290262001) had apparently been corrected. After she submits the necessary compliance paperwork, this issue will be removed from the agenda.

Zoning issues: There had been no activity relating to zoning concerns at 5214 Royal Woods Road (PID 295137000). Regarding 110 Greeley Road and referencing the planning commission's recommendation, Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to send a second letter to the owner demanding that the unauthorized sign be covered or removed and that the owner either resolve the issues with Zoning Administrator John Kemen or come to the next working planning commission meeting on 5 December. If resolutions are not forthcoming, the letter should state that this issue will be forwarded to counsel with all costs being assessed to the property. The motion carried unanimously. Clerk Swanson noted that a letter relating to unpermitted repairs at 7876 Bluebell Road (PID 295103000) had been sent and was returned as undeliverable. He distributed a second draft that would be sent to "occupant." Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the draft. The motion carried unanimously.

Road report: The St. Paul office of the Post Office has denied the town's request to have two mailboxes on Bears Ear moved to Bear Claw Drive. This issue will be dropped from the agenda.

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

Chair Pearson noted that the sales agreement with Barth Construction for their purchase of the township's grader had been signed and returned to the town. Delivery of the new grader is still scheduled for early January. By consensus, the board decided to wait to sign the purchase agreement with Barth until the delivery is verified and to not cash the purchase check until later. Supervisor Graham will report the situation to Barth.

Chair Pearson noted that Road Superintendent Saumer has finished the seal coating of the septic tank.

Chair Pearson updated the board on the potential sale of the township gravel pit, describing his and Clerk Swanson's meeting with legal counsel. Hancock Surveying had completed the survey as requested and would be staking the property shortly as requested by the board. Clerk Swanson had updated the purchasers that there would be a delay in the finalization of the paperwork until the December meeting. Legal counsel had submitted a draft of a "hold harmless" document for signature of the purchaser. Chair Pearson approved the draft and Clerk Swanson will report that to counsel. The purchasers had requested that a "Dead End" sign be placed at the beginning of Sage Drive. Road Superintendent Saumer noted that the township could use several such signs. Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to authorize Road Superintendent Saumer to purchase four "Dead End" signs that meet current state standards for retro-reflectivity. The motion carried with Chair Pearson, Supervisor Schlaeger, and Supervisor Graham voting "Aye."

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Clerk Swanson updated the board on the FEMA grant request, noting that the Raspberry Road culvert project had been approved for payment (\$5,225.12), that the Grasston Court (\$4,750.33) and township-wide road graveling projects (\$16,226.10) have been submitted and were awaiting approval by FEMA, and that the Bluebell Road project was in the final stages of being submitted.

New Business:

Clerk Swanson introduced Reolution 2023-8 designating the Royalton Town Hall as the polling place for elections in 2024 and as the site of absentee voting for the 2024 township election. The motion carried unanimously. A copy of said resolution shall accompany these minutes.

Chair Pearson called attention to the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Townships in St. Cloud, 7-9 December 2023. No supervisors expressed interest in attending. By consensus, the board authorized Clerk Swanson to attend the 8 December sessions if his schedule permits.

Supervisor Graham reported that the plow truck discussed at the last meeting had been sold before he could contact the owner. He reported the availability of a 2006 International 9500 tandem axle vehicle with wing, new tires, and a four-way front plow. The vehicle has 210,000 miles on and is available for \$69,900. Discussion occurred on the need for a truck at this time; the impact of the purchase on the finances of the town; and the value of the current truck for resale. By consensus, the board authorized Supervisor Graham to inspect the vehicle.

Clerk Swanson reported that former Chair Wayne Olson had cancelled the subscription in his name for Zoom meetings. Deputy Clerk Anderson noted that the Teams meeting system has been working well and that the town no longer has a need for this subscription.

Supervisor Schlaeger noted that Art Pangerl, former township road grader operator for 21 years, has died. Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Chair Pearson seconded, to send flowers in the town's name at a cost not to exceed \$60.00. The motion carried with Chair Pearson, Supervisor Schlaeger, and Supervisor Graham voting "Aye."

Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Schlaeger seconded, to pay the (late arriving) \$800.00 bill of Hancock Surveying. The motion carried with Chair Pearson, Supervisor Schlaeger, and Supervisor Graham voting "Aye."

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

FYI:

The signed Braham fire contract was mailed on 27 October 2023.

The next regular meeting of the town board will be at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, 19 December 2023.

At 9:04 p.m., Supervisor Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham 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