

Royalton Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006  
Email: royalton@royaltontownship.com -- Website: [www.royaltontownship.com](http://www.royaltontownship.com)  
27 August 2024  
Approved

7:47 p.m., 27 August 2024, Chair Jeff Schlaeger called the Royalton Township regular board meeting to order, with Supervisor John Graham, Supervisor Pete Belland, Treasurer Jenessa Saumer, and Clerk Duane Swanson present. Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, Zoning Administrator John Kemen, Road Superintendent Dan Saumer, and Secondary Road Operator Steve Belland also attended, along with members of the planning commission and members of the public. The pledge of allegiance had been recited at the reconvened annual meeting preceding this meeting and was not repeated.

Supervisor Graham moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to approve the agenda as presented, with the addition of a complaint and lot size on Homer Road. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of 30 July 2024 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Saumer read her report, noting that as of 1 July 2024, the township had a beginning balance of \$346,028.29 in the treasury. Deposits were \$12,400.95, disbursements were \$53,077.01, leaving an ending balance on 31 July of \$357,512.70. Outstanding checks were \$52,160.47 and a certificate of deposit in the amount of \$50,000 was in place, leaving a spendable balance of \$255,352.23. Supervisor Graham moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to approve the report. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger called for discussion of checks #11247-11289 in the amount of \$22,858.02. Clerk Swanson noted that the checks include a \$1,000 payment to ECE in fulfillment of the board's commitment to that firm's broadband grant per Resolution 2022-3. He also reported that the CenturyLink bill had two questionable charges for directory assistance calls. The office will investigate. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve payment of the bills. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Schlaeger, Supervisor Graham, and Supervisor Belland voting "Aye."

Chair Schlaeger then altered the agenda to permit Travis Kemen to address the board's questions on several technological issues. Regarding cameras on campus, Mr. Kemen noted that the town should have a policy stating what is being covered (most likely behind the board table, in the entryway or parking lot, and toward the playground), where the recordings would be stored, would audio be included, and who was eligible to review them. Because the boardroom is a public space the public should have no expectation of privacy; however, notice must be posted that cameras are in use. Most cameras have a ninety-degree view, although that could be expanded. Wired cameras are the most reliable. By consensus, the board asked Mr. Kemen to continue working on a proposal for three cameras and for any recommendations he has on policies. Mr. Kemen noted that if meetings are recorded, a specific use and retention policy must be in place. He reminded the township that even if the policy calls for the recordings to be only for the purpose of composing the minutes, there will still be a window between the recording and their disposition that they would be subject to subpoena or listening by the public. These legal possibilities should be carefully considered in writing the policies. Mr. Kemen also commented on security for the office and records storage room. Digital security with key fobs will be more expensive; electronic keypads would be less so. Both would have the capability of recording whose codes are used for entry. By consensus, the board encouraged more investigation into additional security only for the office and records room. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to refer these issues to the planning commission for study. The motion carried unanimously. By consensus, Mr. Kemen was asked to put together cost projections for the elements discussed above.

Planning Commission recommendations:

At its meeting on 19 August 2024 the commission reviewed the proposal of Joseph Pates and John Nuckols for a minor subdivision of PID 290136003 (12014 Brunswick Road). At that time, the commission asked for an updated certificate of survey containing the PID number of the parcel, as required by Royalton's procedures. The updated survey was reviewed by the commission and endorsed by Zoning Administrator Kemen and Septic Administrator Thompson. Supervisor Graham moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to approve the minor subdivision request of

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Joseph Pates and John Nuckols for dividing PID 290136003 into two parcels of 20.1 acres and 22.9 acres respectively, according to a certificate of survey by Straightline Surveying, Inc., dated 20 August 2024 and to authorize the office to report said approval to Pine County. The motion carried unanimously. This approval does not include the variance request of the parties for a second dwelling on the remainder parcel; that request will be considered separately.

The commission is continuing work on the proposed campground ordinance.

The commission requested approval to have two working meetings in September in order to work on the backlog of issues. By consensus, the board approved this request, noting that this approval was not setting a precedent for more than one meeting per month.

Old Business:

Septic issues: Clerk Swanson noted the updated septic report in member's packets. Septic Administrator Thompson reported that PID 290124003 (10343 Wildflower Road) is waiting for electrical work so that it can be finalized. No current updates were available for PID 295148000 (7744 Royal Way). PID 20136003 (10214 Brunswick Road) needs a new application in order to finalize compliance; a final inspection was never called for. A compliance inspection report has been submitted for PID 290061004 (3084 Pokegama Lake Road) indicating that the current system is an imminent threat to public health and safety. Clerk Swanson presented a draft letter notifying the owner what needs to be done. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the draft. The motion carried unanimously.

Zoning issues: Pine County Attorney Reese Frederickson has communicated that the zoning concerns at 5214 Royal Woods Road (PID 295137000) are scheduled to be heard at an arraignment hearing at 1:00 p.m. on 11 September. Legal counsel for the town and the legal owner of PID 295137000 (1995 Royal Heights Lane) are currently discussing options to address the "junk" and living issues on the parcel.

Road issues: Clerk Swanson noted that an updated road report is in member's packets. All road signs ordered have been installed; additional mailbox posts have been received. Road Superintendent Saumer will install a new mailbox at 12238 Homer Road soon. By consensus, the board authorized Road Superintendent Saumer to acquire enough dirt to fix the ruts at 4272 Timber Drive. Supervisor Belland reported that Rydberg & Sons is hoping to begin the ditching and culvert install projects soon. No further updates on Road T-13 were available.

Supervisor Belland reported on the poor condition of 540<sup>th</sup> Street at the intersection with Elmcrest Avenue. After discussion, Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to authorize Road Superintendent Saumer to procure approximately ten (10) yards of gravel to repair the swale and to authorize the clerk to inform Nessel Township of this repair. The motion carried unanimously, with Chair Schlaeger, Supervisor Graham, and Supervisor Belland voting "Aye."

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to request sealed bids for the town's single axle dump truck. Road Superintendent Saumer will work with Clerk Swanson to compose a notice for area papers and the website. Sealed bids are to be accepted in the clerk's office until 7:30 p.m., 24 September 2024. The notice will include an option for the town board to reject all bids. The motion carried unanimously.

Building issues: The picnic shelter update is awaiting scheduling. Supervisor Graham called for quotes for resealing the septic tanks at the town hall. Only one quote was received. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to accept the bid of Ramberg Excavating of \$2,100 to excavate four risers and reseal the tank, with other conditions. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Schlaeger, Supervisor Graham, and Supervisor Belland voting "Aye." Supervisor Graham will coordinate.

In other action, Supervisor Graham noted the map in member's packets showing the overlap between the Braham and Rush City fire department service areas. Supervisor Graham and Clerk Swanson gave reports on their attendance at the District 7 MAT meeting. Supervisors Graham and Belland still need to be trained for the Board of Appeal and Equalization. Clerk Swanson reported on the primary election, thanking judges for their good work.

Supervisor Belland reported that Les Orvis, chair of the planning commission, has not submitted a letter of resignation as requested at the July board meeting. Mr. Orvis addressed the board, noting that this was a "mockery" and

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proceeded to accuse present and former board members of open meeting violations and lying. Supervisor Belland moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to remove Mr. Orvis as a member of the planning commission, noting that planning commission members serve at the pleasure of the board. The motion carried, 2-1 with Chair Schlaeger and Supervisor Belland voting “Aye” and Supervisor Graham voting “Nay.”

New Business:

Chair Schlaeger read proposed resolution 2024-6 accepting a donation of ready mix from Knife River for use in the playground upgrade. Supervisor Belland moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Swanson reported that the 2024 legislature had substantially increased allocation to local jurisdictions for upgrades to voting operations. In 2023, Royalton’s allocation was \$83.94 with substantial reporting costs; the board authorized the amount to remain with Pine County. County Auditor Kelly Schroeder reports that the 2024 allocation to Royalton would be \$324.74 with simple reporting to her. She asked if Royalton would want to reverse its 2023 decision and request allocation in 2024. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to request Royalton’s 2024 allocation. The motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Swanson noted the free legal seminar in Rutledge by Couri and Ruppe Law Office on 28 September 2024. Board members asked to be reminded of this event closer to it happening.

Zoning Administrator Kemen reported that there have been questions about road frontage of lots on Homer Road and that a complaint about Rum River Construction Consultants has been filed with the township. Both issues will be reviewed by the planning commission.

Public Forum: Public forum was offered. Planning commission member Gary Valvoda noted new information about the town’s resolution requesting to opt-in to Pine County cannabis regulations. Patrice DeGray read a statement from Steve Froelich on cannabis regulation. Les Orvis noted the existing vacancy on the planning commission and recommended Roger Teich for the position. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to place a legal notice in the paper calling for letters of interest in the position to be received by the 24 September board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence:

Clerk Swanson reported that Royalton will receive \$2,336 in town aid from the state of Minnesota in 2025. Chair Schlaeger noted the Pine County Hazard Mitigation Plan update and that the fully executed copy of Amendment #1 of the contract with the Pine City fire department had been returned to the town.

FYI:

The next regular meeting of the town board will be at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, 24 September 2024.

At 9:05 p.m., Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk

Jeff Schlaeger, Chair/Supervisor

John Graham, Vice Chair/Supervisor

Pete Belland, Supervisor

Jenessa M. Saumer, Treasurer