

Royalton Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006
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24 September 2024
Approved

7:30 p.m., 24 September 2024, Chair Jeff Schlaeger called the Royalton Township regular board meeting to order, with Supervisor John Graham, Supervisor Pete Belland, and Clerk Duane Swanson present and Treasurer Jenessa Saumer absent. Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, Zoning Administrator John Kemen, Road Superintendent Dan Saumer, and Secondary Road Operator Steve Belland also attended, along with Gary Valvoda of the planning commission and members of the public. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the agenda as presented, with the addition three items: planning commission membership, complaint on Cabin Drive, and a potential security issue. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to receive the minutes of the reconvened annual meeting of 27 August 2024; they will be approved at the 2025 annual meeting in March. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Graham moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of 27 August 2024 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

In Treasurer Saumer's absence, Clerk Swanson read her report, noting that as of 1 August 2024, the township had a beginning balance of \$305,352.23 in the treasury. Deposits were \$8,914.07, disbursements were \$21,858.02, leaving an ending bank balance on 31 August of \$308,996.88. Outstanding checks were \$16,588.60 and a certificate of deposit in the amount of \$50,000 was in place, leaving a spendable balance of \$242,408.28. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the report. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger called for discussion of checks #11290-11324 in the amount of \$9,708.10. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve payment of the bills. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Schlaeger, Supervisor Graham, and Supervisor Belland voting "Aye." Clerk Swanson presented four late arriving claims and asked for authority to issue checks: Federated Co-ops, Inc. (lumber for playground), \$129.10; Kanabec County Publications (truck sale ad), \$56.10; Isanti-Chisago County Star (truck sale ad), \$60.32; Oslin Lumber (wood for playground), \$1,628.66. Supervisor Belland moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve payment of the late-arriving claims, with Chair Schlaeger, Supervisor Graham, and Supervisor Belland voting "Aye."

Planning Commission recommendations:

The commission had studied the latest minor subdivision proposal of Joe Pates, to split the remainder segment of PID 290136003 (as approved at the 27 August 2024 meeting) into two new segments. The commission reviewed a sketch of the proposal based on the older certificate of survey. This proposed split separates the barn (to be used as an occasional dwelling) from the main dwelling parcel, thereby negating the need for a variance from the ordinance that permits only one dwelling on a parcel. Both parcels are in the process of having new septic systems. Zoning Administrator Kemen and Septic Administrator Thompson had approved the request. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the minor subdivision request of Joe Pates to split the remainder parcel of PID 290136003 into two parcels of 10.0 and 10.1 acres, contingent on receipt of an updated certificate of survey; to remove the variance request of Joe Pates that is pending from consideration; and to authorize the office to notify Pine County of the town's approval of the minor subdivision. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Graham updated the board on discussions regarding the building permit contract with Rum River Construction Consultants, noting that it has a two-month window for termination and that numerous complaints have been made about the firm's performance and costs, that the commission has for nearly two years been considering an in-house alternative to the State Building Code, and the difficulty of finding a state-approved building inspector. Unadopting the state building code requires a change to the town's ordinances. The board agreed that all ordinance draft changes should be approved by legal counsel. After discussion, Supervisor Graham moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to move to retract the town's adoption of the state building code and to notify Rum River Construction

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Consultants of its intent to terminate the town’s contract with it. The motion carried 2-1, with Chair Schlaeger and Supervisor Graham voting “Aye” and Supervisor Belland voting “Nay.”

Old Business:

Septic issues: Septic Administrator Thompson reported that PID 290124003 (10343 Wildflower Road) is waiting for electrical work so that it can be finalized; that PID 295148000 (7744 Royal Way) is also waiting on electrical; and that PID 20136003 (10214 Brunswick Road) can be finalized upon approval of the minor subdivision request. The imminent public health threat for PID 290061004 (3084 Pokegama Lake Road) has apparently been taken of; Administrator Thompson is seeking required documentation of the correction. By consensus, the board gave permission to finalize the septic system at the guesthouse on PID 29016003 due to the approval of the minor subdivision request; the main dwelling is in the process of getting a new septic system. A complaint had been received regarding the septic system at PID 290156000 (6559 Raspberry Road) not being in compliance with M.S. Statutes. Septic Administrator Thompson noted that complainant information is not public, and, therefore, cannot be shared. In response, Clerk Swanson had drafted a letter declaring the system to be an imminent health threat. Clerk Swanson noted the policy of presenting a draft to the board for discussion and action before sending such a letter. The board discussed the history of the complaint and the town’s past practice of dealing with septic issues only at the point of sale. After discussion, Supervisor Belland moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to table the issue until the October meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Regarding the complaint of raw sewage being dumped on PID 295231000 (1995 Royal Heights Lane), Septic Administrator Thompson noted that this property is in Shorelands and has informed County Auditor Kelly Schroeder about the situation. Audience participation noted the past difficulties with this property, that harassment of neighbors continues, and that additional campers appear to be on the property. Clerk Swanson reported that town legal counsel has been in communication with counsel for the absentee owners of he property but without apparent success at moving anything forward. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to encourage the submission of photographs to the town hall and to authorize the office to forward those to legal counsel for recommendation and action. The motion carried unanimously.

Zoning issues: No information was available on the results, if any, of the arraignment regarding building and septic issues at 5214 Royal Woods Road (PID 295137000) that was scheduled for 11 September 2024.

Road issues: Clerk Swanson noted that an updated road report is in members’ packets. Supervisor Belland reported that he had installed a new mailbox and post at 12238 Homer Road on Sunday, 22 September 2024, and had talked with the homeowner. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to purchase two regular, one medium, and one large mailbox to have on hand should the need arise in the future. The motion carried unanimously. Road Superintendent Saumer reported that he had used excess town hall dirt from the town property to fill in ruts at 4772 Timber Drive. Supervisor Belland reported that Rydberg & Sons is hoping to begin the ditching and culvert install projects the second week in October. Road Superintendent Saumer reported that he had removed brush and trees from Hummingbird Road (north end), Royal Heights Lane, and other locations. Road Superintendent Saumer reported that 14.21 tons of additional Class V gravel had been spread on 540th Street at the intersection with Elmcrest Avenue. Clerk Swanson reported that Nessel Township had been notified of this repair and requested to pay one-half the cost. No further updates on Road T-13 were available.

Campus building issues: The picnic shelter construction is moving forward; framing for the shelter is up; ground has been prepared for cement work which is scheduled for later in the week. Supervisor Graham reported that the resealing of the septic tanks at the town hall has been completed and code-compliant tank covers have been installed on all six tanks. Only one tank had to be sealed from the outside; others could be sealed from the inside.

Travis Kemen was present to explain Design for Learning’s quotation for cameras on the campus. He proposed five exterior cameras covering the parking lot, town hall, sheds, and playground (with video only) and three internal cameras capable of both audio and video at a total cost of \$6,719.83. During discussion, it was noted that the cameras should last five to ten years, there is no monthly fee, but occasional updates will be necessary, and that policies should be in place before installation and usage. Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to table a decision until policies, drafted by the planning commission, can be in place. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Graham noted the apparent overlap between the Braham and Rush City fire service areas and recommended that these issues be resolved at the time of the next contract renewal. The board noted the invitation to a Braham Fire Department open house on 25 September 2024, 6:00 p.m.

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Clerk Swanson noted that Supervisors Graham and Belland still needed to be trained for the Board of Appeal and Equalization meetings in April 2025. He reminded members of the legal seminar by Couri & Ruppe at Rutledge, 28 September 2024. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to authorize Clerk Swanson to attend, if his schedule permits. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Clerk Swanson reported on advertising for the sale of the 1995 plow truck, with right-hand, twelve-foot plow, eight-foot wing, and sanding attachment, noting that the notice had been in the Kanabec County Times (two issues), the Isanti-Chisago County Star (two issues) and the Pine City Pioneer (one issue, due to printing error) and posted on the town bulletin board. Road Superintendent Saumer had advertised on the Internet. By consensus, the board decided to proceed with opening the bids. Three bids were received. After consideration, Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to accept the bid of \$10,200 from Erickson Asphalt Services, Inc. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to accept the resignation of Priscilla Schneider from the planning commission, effective 28 August 2024, and to approve Resolution 2024-7 thanking Priscilla P. Schneider for her service on the planning commission. The motion carried unanimously. Said resolution shall be a part of these minutes.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to accept the resignation of town hall cleaner Roxanne Orvis, dated 27 August 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

The board discussed the position of cleaner for the town hall. After hearing from Paul Beniot, Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to offer the position to Mr. Benoit at a salary of \$40.00 per hour. The position entails one monthly cleaning of the public areas of the town hall building (approximately two hours), with spot cleaning (generally one hour) as requested by town staff or supervisors. Cleaning of the office and records storeroom will be the responsibility of the office staff. This is an employee position, with PERA benefits, with a probationary period of six (6) months. The cleaner will be responsible for notifying town staff when cleaning supplies are needed. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve Resolution 2024-8 thanking Leslie M. Orvis for his service on the planning commission. The motion carried unanimously. Said resolution shall be part of these minutes.

Supervisor Belland moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve Resolution 2024-9 appointing election judges for 5 November 2024 general election. The motion carried unanimously. Said resolution shall be part of these minutes.

Chair Schlaeger called for discussion about the two vacancies on the planning commission. By consensus, the board decided to listen to those individuals who had requested appointment and to select two new members at this meeting. The following individuals gave presentations; some had written statements on file: Doug Stanger, Tom Madison, Troy Downing, Gordon Nordby, Roger Teich, Denise Weis. By voice vote, Gordon Nordby received three votes; Doug Stanger received two votes, and Troy Downing received one vote. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to appoint Doug Stanger and Gordon Nordby to the planning commission; terms will be indefinite. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Schlaeger thanked all the candidates for their interest in the township.

The board noted an anonymous complaint about people living in campers at 8011 Cabin Drive (PID 290043000). Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to direct the office to send a letter citing the ordinance portion concerning living in campers. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Forum:

Joe Zappa questioned if the board had written a letter to “opt-in” to Pine County’s retail cannabis ordinance. By consensus, the board directed the office to draft said letter for consideration at the next meeting.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

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FYI:

July and August reports of building or zoning permits issued for new residents were submitted to the US census bureau and the 2024 building permits were filed with the Pine County assessor.

The next regular meeting of the town board will be at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, 29 October 2024.

At 9:20 p.m., Supervisor Graham moved, Chair Schlaeger 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