

Royalton Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006
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27 May 2025
Approved

7:30 p.m., 27 May 2025, Chair Jeff Schlaeger called the Royalton Township regular board meeting to order, with Supervisors John Graham and Pete Belland, Treasurer Jenessa Saumer, and Clerk Duane Swanson present. Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, Zoning Administrator John Kemen, Deputy Clerk Andrea Anderson, and Road Superintendent Dan Saumer, along with members of the planning commission and the public attended. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the agenda as presented, with the addition of cannabis update. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the minutes of the board of appeal and equalization meeting of 28 April 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the minutes of the road inspection of 28 April 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approved the minutes of the joint public hearing of 29 April 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of 29 April 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Saumer read her report, noting that as of 1 April 2025, the township had a beginning balance of \$348,583.41 in the treasury. Deposits were \$105.73, disbursements were \$12,671.10, with an ending balance on 30 April 2025 of \$336,018.04. Outstanding checks were \$10,403.35 and a certificate of deposit in the amount of \$51,058.42 was in place, leaving a spendable balance of \$284,959.62. Supervisor Graham moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to approve the report. The motion carried unanimously. Treasurer Saumer noted that the certificate of deposit at Frandsen Bank and Trust had been renewed, with a new balance of \$51,058.42.

Chair Schlaeger called for discussion of checks #11529-11547 in the amount of \$14,231.80. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve payment of the checks as presented. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Schlaeger and Supervisors Graham and Belland voting "Aye."

Planning Commission recommendations:

Representing the commission, Interim Chair Gary Valvoda, recommended the security policy outline that Travis Kemen had presented to the township. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to direct the commission to review the cost implications and to include the personal security of town personnel in its deliberations. The motion carried unanimously.

Regarding building officials and inspections, the commission reviewed the qualifications of Caleb Christenson, a fully licensed building official, and Dan Rydberg, a limited license inspector, who would work under the direction of Mr. Christenson. The commission recommended their approval. Supervisor Graham moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the recommendations to enter into a contract with Caleb Christenson for building official services and to inform Rum River Construction Consultants, the town's current building official, that the town would invoke its 60-day notification clause to terminate the existing contract, that the current building official would continue to complete the building permits that have been accepted heretofore, and that Rum River Construction Consultants would accept no new projects from the township. The motion carried unanimously. Leslie Orvis noted that the town board had approved a motion at its 24 September 2024 meeting

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to unadopt the state building code and that the code was no longer enforceable in the township. Audience members questioned whether refunds would have to be made. Gordy Nordby noted that no refunds were necessary because the adoption of the code had not been removed from the ordinance. Noting the vacancy on the commission, by consensus, the board invited candidates to submit applications. The vacancy will be announced on the website, but the board declined to pay for a notice in the newspaper.

Clerk Swanson reported that, as directed by the board, he had emailed Pine County Auditor-Treasurer to ask what forms needed to be submitted to transfer cannabis regulation to Pine County. She responded that no additional forms were necessary.

Old Business:

Septic issues: Regarding PID 295231000 (1995 Royal Heights Lane), based on actions by the town counsel and Pine County, it appears that the owners are cleaning up the property to prepare for sale. No action is required at this time. The planning commission had considered the request of Michael Flesichhacker for a variance to permit the installation of a Type III septic system on PID 290215001 instead of a Type I system. Based on the recommendation of Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, the commission recommended approval. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to grant a variance for Mr. Fleischhacker to install a Type III system based on the limited depth of good soil. The motion carried unanimously.

Zoning issues: Regarding PID 295137000 (5214 Royal Woods Road), a jury trial is scheduled for 21 July in Pine County District Court. No additional action has been taken regarding PID 290043000 (8011 Cabin Drive).

On the road inspection the board noted the recent planting of trees within the right-of-way at PID 295205000 (9842 Riverbed Road). Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the letter drafted by Clerk Swanson notifying the owners to replant the trees outside of the right-of-way. The motion carried unanimously.

Wayne Davis was present to explain the situation regarding his property at 5659 Royal River Road (PID 295099000). After first referring Mr. Davis to Royalton, Pine County has issued a site permit for a pole shed. Being in the Shoreland District, Mr. Davis has had detailed surveys completed, noting the required elevation of the structure above the water lines and the placement of the structure on the lot. With the concurrence of Zoning Administrator John Kemen, the board gave Mr. Davis the go ahead to proceed with the construction.

Road issues: Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve the request of Kyle Bowman to chlorinate that portion of Cabin Drive in front of his property with the stipulation that signs be erected immediately at the time of chlorinating. In accordance with town policy, the town will reimburse Mr. Bowman for one-half of the cost of the application. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Belland noted that he had a draft of a “quote sheet” that would be submitted to all firms interested in bidding on ditching and culvert projects. He requested the supervisors to review the draft and report recommendations to him. Supervisor Belland also noted the road notes spreadsheet prepared by Clerk Swanson and reviewed by Superintendent Saumer. He recommended delaying action until he had met with Superintendent Saumer. By consensus, the board concurred.

Campus building issues: Treasurer Saumer reported that Talon Sanitation is now providing garbage and recycling services to the town and that the firm is willing to receive an annual payment. Waste Management has removed their containers from town property. Clerk Swanson reported that Travis Kemen is working on the change from our website to a .gov address. Our preferred name, royaltontownship.gov, is not permitted by federal authorities and Mr. Kemen is negotiating for a similar name acceptable to the federal government.

Chair Schlaeger reported that \$14,017.96 (of the \$20,000 donation from Rock Creek Lions) have been spent on the picnic shelter. He reported on his search for picnic tables for the playground shelter. Chair Schlaeger

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moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to purchase four 8-foot rectangular metal tables at a cost of \$1,070 each. The motion carried unanimously, with Chair Schlaeger and Supervisors Graham and Belland voting “Aye.”

Treasurer Saumer updated the board on establishing an Amazon Prime Account through the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT), noting that for two years there is no cost to the township, that this account would make purchasing easier, would eliminate the costs associated with travel and time to purchase supplies, and could be easily canceled should MAT begin to charge for this service. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to approve establishment of this account with the clerk, deputy clerk, and treasurer having authority to place orders. The motion carried unanimously.

John DeGray read a statement noting his concern over the cannabis decision at the April meeting, specifically relating to the smell potentially emanating from the greenhouses. From his discussions with the Office of Cannabis Management, inside greenhouse air will be regulated by the state, but air leaving the greenhouses would be subject to local zoning regulation.

New Business:

The board reviewed the town’s 2025/2026 consolidated liability and property damage coverage through MATIT. By consensus, it recommended no changes.

The board reaffirmed the Southern Pine County Fire District Committee’s decision to appoint Charles Smith of Paradigm Triad as contractor for the fire services study and to authorize the clerk to report said decision to the study’s fiscal agent, Pine City Township. The motion carried unanimously.

The board revisited the issue of the vacancy on the planning commission. Planning Commission Member Gordy Nordby addressed the board, thanking recently resigned chair Jessica Johnson for her great leadership, calling her the “greatest asset to the planning commission in the last twenty years.” He then noted there had been much spinning of the wheels, with discussion on topics not specifically directed by the supervisors, with allegations of perfidy and treachery. He noted the need for a reset and recommended that the planning commission be terminated. Gail Downing asked what the meaning of treason is, alleging betrayal and bullying on the part of members of the commission. She presented the board with a petition of over 100 signatures to abolish the planning commission. Alex Anderson asked why there is so much hate. After discussion, Supervisor Belland moved, Supervisor Graham seconded, to disband the planning commission and to convene the supervisors as a working group at 6:30 on 17 June 2025 to consider the reorganization of the commission. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Forum:

Chair Schlaeger called for public forum comments: Planning Commission Member Gary Valvoda noted that the public’s business must be conducted in public, decrying the lack of order at meetings, and the innuendo that is pervasive. Peter McMahon expressed his willingness to be a member of the planning commission. Leslie Orvis accused the planning commission of being biased and urged the return of Jessica Johnson. Denise Weis noted that the public has a right to attend meetings and to speak with office holders. Patrice DeGray noted the Office of Cannabis Management’s involvement with the public and expressed disappointment about the hatred that is rampant in the township.

Correspondence:

Clerk Swanson indicated there was no correspondence to report.

FYI:

Chair Schlaeger noted that the April report of new housing units was submitted to the US census bureau (30 April); that the fully executed agreement with the Pine County assessor had been returned to the town (8 May), and that Supervisor Belland, Road Superintendent Saumer, and Secondary Road Operator Steve Belland would be attending the LTAP roadway maintenance demonstration in Cloquet (29 May).

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The next regular meeting of the town board will be at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, 24 June 2025.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk

Jeff Schlaeger, Chair

John Graham, Vice-Chair

Pete Belland, Supervisor

Jenessa M. Saumer, Treasurer